

DAYS IN THE GOLDEN EAST



THE ROMANCE OF TRAVEL

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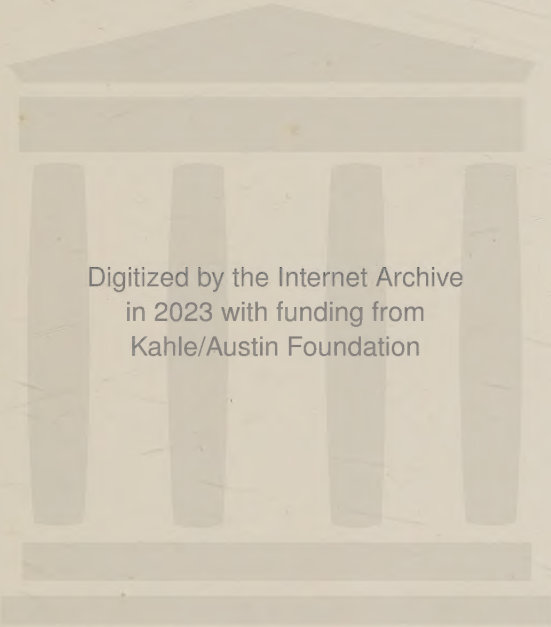
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THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, JERUSALEM.

The ROMANCE
OF TRAVEL

DAYS IN
THE GOLDEN
EAST

BY
ELIOT Warburton



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THE
ROMANCE OF TRAVEL

A CRUISE IN NORTHERN SEAS

BY LORD DUFFERIN

IN THE FORESTS OF BRAZIL

BY H. W. BATES

A TRIP UP THE NILE

BY ELIOT WARBURTON

DAYS IN THE GOLDEN EAST

BY ELIOT WARBURTON

THE LAND OF THE LAMAS

BY THE ABBÉ HUC

REDMAN AND BUFFALO

BY WILLIAM A. BELL

PREFACE

THIS series is intended to fulfil a want long felt in schools. Teachers and others, interested in the study of geography, have often insisted on the importance of boys and girls reading genuine accounts of great voyages and discoveries as told by the travellers themselves; such books, from the point of view both of geography and of literature, are much more valuable than second-hand accounts of lands and peoples such as make up the usual "Geography Reader." The records of famous travellers are among the most interesting books in our language, and the careful reading of such books affords valuable lessons in geography, especially on its more "human" side.

These books have been carefully edited, but not condensed; occasional names and passages, and technical descriptions and details—which are not necessary to the enjoyment and continuity of the story—have been omitted, and maps and pictures and occasional explanations of terms have been added, so as to make the books thoroughly suitable for children of school age.

This series will, it is believed, prove that real tales of travel are (to say the least) quite as easy to read as ordinary books on geography.

NOTE

THE work by Eliot Warburton, from which these chapters are taken, is perhaps the most famous book of Eastern Travel. It is an account of a tour in the Levant, including Palestine, Syria, and Constantinople—regions where the Cross and the Crescent, the Christian and the Turk, have struggled for many long years. No other modern writer, it has been said, has ever depicted the Holy Land and other famous regions of the East with a pencil at once so reverent and so picturesque.

CHAPTER I

THE LEVANT

I

THE "Levant" of the Italians, the "Orient" of the French, the "Morgenland" of the Germans, are paraphrases of the "East." The former term is applied not only to the seas, but to the shores, over which the sun *rises* to the morningward of Malta. Bright and blue as it is, and fringed by the fairest and most memorial shores, it is yet a very lonely sea: wild winds that are almost typhoons sweep over it; iron coasts wrap it round: and, south of Cerigo, there is not a safe harbour in all its wide expanse, save that of Alexandria.

The commerce of the early world found shelter in the ports of Tyre, Sidon, Acre, and other harbours, only fit for modern small craft. These are now filled with the ruins of the palaces that once overshadowed them; or closed up by ancient sands that might have run from the glass of old Time himself.

The Levantine sea is seldom without a swell; and the wind, like a young child, is generally either troublesome or asleep; long calms, or changing, gusty breezes, render steamers especially valuable in these waters. The paucity of passengers, how-

ever, and the decrease of trade between Egypt and Syria, have obliged the steamers to give way to a sailing-packet between Alexandria and Beyrout.

I visited the admiral's flag-ship, and some other Egyptian men-of-war, and then pulled alongside the English schooner that was about to sail for Beyrout. The blue-peter was flying on board this bark, and the English mails had been transferred from the Oriental steamer, when I hurried on board with my voluminous luggage.

A man accustomed only to travel about England, with his couple of portmanteaus and a dressing-case, has little idea of the appurtenances of an Oriental traveller. There are no hotels by the wayside on *his* journey : the natives never travel except from dire necessity, and then seldom change their clothes until arrived at their destination : when night comes on, they lie down to sleep in the open air, or in some filthy khan (or inn). An Englishman, therefore, with any regard to cleanliness or comfort, is obliged to travel with an assortment of goods like those of an upholsterer, comprising every article his various exigencies may require, from a tent to a toasting-fork. He must have bed, bedding, and dressing-room ; a pantry, scullery, kitchen, and bakehouse, dangling on his camels : saddle, bridle, and water-bottles, arms of all kinds, carpets, mats, and lanterns ; besides a wardrobe that would serve for a green-room, containing all sorts of garments, from the British uniform to the Syrian turban, the Arab's kefieh,¹

¹ Kerchief worn as head-dress.

and the Greek capote.¹ All these articles loaded a large boat to the water's edge, and took some time to transfer to the little packet, that lay pitching and straining at her anchor like an impatient steed that paws the ground.

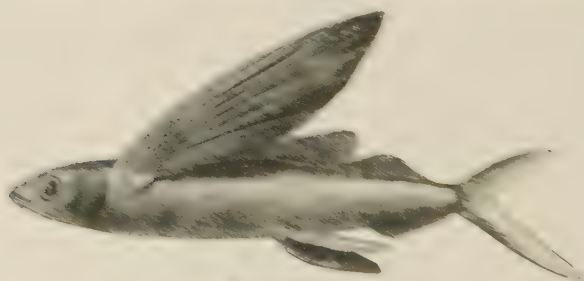
After months of indolent life in sultry Egypt, among screaming Arabs or jabbering dragomans (guides or interpreters), to rush away over the lively waves, and hear English voices, and watch the steady conduct of English sailors, is a most pleasant change. It was blowing very fresh as we ran out to sea, under a close-reefed mainsail, but the sun shone brightly, and the waves were of the purple colour that they wore to Homer's eyes; their foam flew from them in rainbow fragments, and the gallant little craft darted from wave to wave like the joyous seabirds that flew around her. Now she hovers for a moment on the watery precipice, now flings herself into the bosom of old Neptune, whose next throb sends her aloft again into the golden sunshine and the diamond spray, till the merry gale catches her drapery, and she plunges once more into the watery valleys as if at hide-and-seek with her invisible playfellow, the wind.

Our passengers consisted of two English officers, a Swiss merchant, and two Italian travellers; these, with the captain and lieutenant, made quite a crowd in the little cabin. They were all pleasant fellows, and our voyage savoured more of a cruise in a yacht than a passage in a packet. We never

¹ Long cloak with hood.

saw a sail, or caught sight of land, but now and then we had a glimpse of a dolphin, several flying-fish flattered on board with their audacious wings, and lay panting, but apparently quite contented, on the deck.

On the fourth morning, the coast of Syria rose over the horizon; and the clearness of the atmosphere, together with the speed of our yacht bounding before a southerly gale, made the magnifi-



FLYING FISH

cent panorama of the Lebanon came into sight, and develop its complicated beauty, as if by magic. At sunrise, a faint wavy line announced our approach to land; at noon, we seemed in the very shadows of its mountains, and these mountains looked down upon the Holy Land!

For eighteen hundred years, the Western world, in all its prosperous life and youthful energy, has looked with reverence and hope towards that hopeless and stricken but yet honoured Land. After ages of obscurity and oblivion as a mere province of a fallen empire, that country suddenly

became invested with a glory till then unknown to earth. A few poor fishermen went forth from those shores among the nations, and announced such tidings as changed their destiny for ever. Human life became an altered state; new motives, sympathies, and principles arose, new humanities became developed; new hopes, no longer bounded by, but enlarging from the grave, animated our race. God had been amongst us, and spoken to us, as brethren, of our glorious inheritance.

Phœnician fleets once covered these silent waters; wealthy cities once fringed those lonely shores; and, during three thousand years, War has led all the nations of the earth in terrible procession along those historic plains. Yet it is not mere history that thrills the pilgrim to the Holy Land with such feelings as no other spot on the wide earth inspires; but the belief that on yonder earth the Creator once trod with human feet, bowed down with human suffering, linked to humanity by the divinest sympathy—that of sorrow; bedewing our tombs with His tears, and consecrating our world with His blood. Such thoughts will influence the most thoughtless traveller on his first view of Palestine, and convert the most reckless wanderer into a pilgrim for the time: even the infidel, in his lonely and desecrated heart, must feel a reverence for the *human* character of one who lived and died like Him of Nazareth.

And now we can recognise Sidon and Tyre: now the Pine Forest, and the garden-covered promontory; and now we open the city of Beyrout, with

its groves and dismantled towers, and the magnificent scenery that surrounds it. Soon the anchor plunged into the water, and the sails came fluttering down. An officer from the Board of Health announced a quarantine of twelve days, but permitted us to take a cottage for ourselves, apart from the Lazaretto.¹ Here we were to be watched and guarded, like so many felons; yet still it was a reprieve from that great pest-house, the Lazaretto, whose melancholy inmates we could see wandering to and fro upon their narrow rock.

The next day we landed, and took possession of our cottage, which was prettily situated in a mulberry grove; my two countrymen shared my quarters; while the Italians and the Swiss took possession of a terrace on which they pitched their tent (with a hen-house in which they slept), on the top of a cottage about a hundred yards from ours.

The first sensation of change, from the incessant pitching of the schooner to the repose of shore, was very agreeable; from the perpetual glare of the sun-stricken sea to the soft green of the mulberry groves; and from our monotonous life on board to all the gay variety of Syrian scenery and its picturesque people.

Our cottage prison consists of a large apartment open to the north; from this, branch off three sleeping apartments and a kitchen; and over all are terraces of various altitudes, commanding

¹ *Lazaretto*—hospital for diseased poor, especially for lepers; also a shop or building (as here) for *quarantine* purposes, *i. e.* used for isolating travellers, to prevent their spreading diseases (from Latin *quadraginta*, period of forty days).

splendid views of the city and the bay. The only article of furniture on the premises when we took possession was a plank, which served for a sofa near the window. For the rest, our comforts were but few, even when we had nominally furnished our apartments from the city : my pallet was laid on the cold stone floor, and there was no glass to the windows, through which the noonday sun and the midnight blast came pouring in unchecked.

Being laid up with a severe wound, I bore our quarantine with great philosophy, and was never weary of contemplating the novel scene of busy Syrian life around me. A large family occupied the lower part of our premises ; and the small courtyard into which our window looked was busy with all the little domestic incidents of daily life, in which I soon took as much interest as if I had been one of the family. I sympathised with the changes of weather that affected the operations of the silkworms ; I grieved for the illness of the little child ; I took as much interest in the attentions paid by the young Syrian swains to Katarin and Dudu as they did themselves ; and a baking- or a washing-day appeared to me full of importance.

There was an old Maronite lady, with a costume as indistinguishable in its various wrappings as were her features in their wrinkles. She had three daughters, the eldest of whom was married to the man who farmed the orchard and the groves. This dame was very handsome and industrious, moreover, and, while she carried a sprawling, merry little imp at her bosom, she was perpetually

spinning silk on a spindle, and superintending the economy of her household. Her two sisters were also very handsome; indeed, in my eyes, so long accustomed to Egypt's dusky faces, they seemed beautiful: their complexion was not so dark as that of a thorough-bred Italian, and there was a rich glow of health and freshness in their sun-coloured cheeks.

The married women wore an extraordinary ornament that seems peculiar to them and to the unicorn, consisting of a horn from one to two feet in length, projecting from the upper forehead: this ornament (confined strictly to matrons) is made of tin or silver, according to the wealth of the wearer; it rests upon a pad, and is never taken off, even at night. At a little distance it gives a majestic and imposing character to the figure, and a veil hangs gracefully from it, which can be gathered round the shoulders, and enshrines the wearer as in a tent. The virgins wore their hair floating in curls over their shoulders: their dress is very graceful and pretty. The men, Christians as well as Moslems, wore turbans, loose drawers tied at the knee, and silk waistcoats buttoned up to the neck. Over this was worn on Sundays and holy-days, a large, loose robe, which gave to groups a very picturesque, as to individuals a very dignified appearance. I shall speak of the occupations of this Syrian family as a type of most others.

The household was astir at the first light; Eleesa, the comely matron, first gave liberty to

the denizens of her poultry-yard, and then opened and shut more doors than I thought a village of such houses could contain. Then she called her pretty sisters, who seemed always loth to leave their beds : and then the screaming of children, the crowing of cocks, the lowing of cattle, and the woman-talk that ceased not thenceforth, announce that the day is fairly begun. Michael is ingeniously ploughing the ground between the mulberry-trees with a beautiful little pair of milk-white oxen ; Katarin and Dudu are picking mulberry-leaves for the silkworms ; the old woman is crooning a low song, as she sits and spins in the early sunshine ; and the little children are lisping Arabic requests for bonbons and baksheesh (money) ; a wayfarer diverges from the path to light his pipe, and refolds his turban as he recounts the news ; then succeed other visitors, and all seem welcome, and all squat on the ground, and none derange the business that is going on.

About noon, the family assembles for a repast of bread and clotted milk, and cucumbers and celery, and some sort of thin soup redolent of tomatoes : and then they loiter about in the pleasant shade, and laugh, and enjoy the mere consciousness of living ; and the matron smokes her nargileh,¹ and the man his chibouque,² and then they disperse again to their light labours, until sunset restores them to their leisure and their supper. Then come some men of various ages, and gaily-dressed girls from the city, each sex arriving apart, and only

¹ Water-pipe.

² Long tobacco pipe.

joining company in presence of their mutual friends; or a priest perhaps pays a friendly visit with his dark robes and black turban; and the simple and social people continue in animated talk until the muezzin's call from the minarets¹ an-



NARGILEH

nounces the hour of prayer to the Moslem, and of retirement to these Christians.

Our quarantine lasted fourteen days, after which the surgeon of the Lazaretto and some health-officers came to inspect us, and declared us free.

¹ The slender turrets (minarets) of the mosques (or churches) from which the muezzin (or crier) calls the people to prayer.

I confess I was almost sorry to leave our cottage and my fair friends below, with and without horns; yet, as I stepped into the boat which was to transport me across the bay, I felt the elasticity of restored freedom compensate for everything, even for its privation. Merrily we swept across that beautiful bay. The picturesque town sent forth its voices faintly on the water; boats shot backwards and forwards to the shipping, pulled by turbaned and bearded men; and, here and there, a solitary fisherman exercising his silent but absorbing skill upon parrot-coloured fish.

II

We landed about a mile beyond the town, on some rocks that were nearly level with the tideless sea, and showed numerous traces of the ancient city of Berytus. I had taken apartments in a house belonging to a Maltese, named Antonio Bianchi, whose *present* establishment I can safely recommend to travellers. He then lived in an old-fashioned Syrian house, surrounded by mulberry gardens, which were intersected by paths fenced off by impenetrable barriers of the cactus, or Indian fig. This plant abounds everywhere, and not only protects but shadows all the lanes, commonly attaining to the height of twelve or eighteen feet.

After a few days' residence with Bianchi, I removed to a cottage nearer to the sea, and farther from the town. It belonged to Antonio Tremseni,

a Maltese, who had once been waiter at the Travellers' Club, in London, and who now conducted my simple ménage with as much neatness and elegance as if my dining-room looked out upon Pall Mall. Far different, however, was the view : that which I now beheld is perhaps the finest in the world.

Come out to the terrace, whereon a tent is pitched, and rest upon soft carpets in its shade ; while Tremseni lights your chibouque, and Raswan offers you a cup of Mocha coffee perfumed with ambergris.

Now we can contemplate the prospect in pleasant leisure, whilst our eye ranges like an eagle over earth, and sea, and sky.

From the rich gardens all round us rise numbers of cottages ; and, as the sun is low, their gaily dressed inhabitants come forth on the flat roofs to breathe the cool breezes, and enjoy their pipes and coffee. There is a joyous, an almost festive look in all around us ; the acacia blossoms are dancing in the breeze, the palms are waving salutations, and the flowers are flirting with one another in blushes and perfumed whisperings : the faint plash of the wave is echoed from the rocks ; the hum of the distant city is broken by the rattle of the drum, and pierced by the fife with its wild Turkish music : flocks of pigeons rustle through the air, and to their cooing the woodpecker keeps time, while the sea-birds scream an occasional accompaniment.

To the north, the Mediterranean spreads away to the horizon, blue and unbroken as the heavens

that overarch it; and its bosom, too, is varied with its own light clouds of foam. Beneath us, a proud English frigate and some French and Austrian men-of-war lie at anchor, dark and grim, like watch-dogs over the white-sailed flock of merchantmen, that lie nearer to the shore. The bay is bordered to the right by the magnificent array of the Lebanon mountains, rising from the sea, in which their various hills, glens, and even crag-perched villages, are reflected. Each of those acclivities has a little tract of richly-coloured vegetation hanging from its shoulders like a tartan cloak, and wears a fortress for its crown: from the golden sands below, to the snowy tracts above, the Druse and Maronite districts may be traced as on a map.

Nearer, and in front of us, appears the thin smoke of the city, surrounded by such of the picturesquely-ruined castles and fortifications as the British artillery has spared: encampments of green and yellow tents speck the ground at intervals amongst the groves. The consular flags of Europe are gaily fluttering over the flat-roofed town within, whose monotony is diversified with tower, and mosque, and minaret. Around us, upon gentle slopes, and many terraces, are groves of the fig-tree, the ilex, and the sycamore. Here and there, a small palm-tree waves its plummy head; hedges of flowering cactus, with their fat, fantastic leaves, enclose gardens of small mulberry and pomegranate trees, olives, melons, and cucumbers. The water's edge flings a creamy foam upon black

rocks, frequently showing traces of edifices of the ancient city that have long since crumbled into gravel.

About this time, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from Prince K., whom I had met in the Tombs of Thebes. He was knocked up by his journey, and I was still unable to ride; so I took him in my boat to the Dog River, a stream that issues from a picturesque ravine about nine miles from Beyrout, on the road to Tripoli. The sea ran high, and the wind was as much as our little craft could stagger under as we ran along in the shadow of the Lebanon. On rounding a bold headland, a new scene disclosed itself: a deep valley opened in the very heart of the mountains, and from its green and pleasant gloom the bright little river we were in search of gleamed suddenly into light; the steep hills that formed its banks were covered with dark shrubs below and grey crags above, and crowned with a convent. A beautiful ruined aqueduct, tapestried with ivy and flowering parasites, ran along the base of the mountain; and a picturesque old bridge terminated the view; on the shore stood a khan (inn), that rather resembled a bower, so thickly was it covered with vines and shaded by trees.

The entrance to this fairy spot was guarded from the angry sea by masses of black rocks, which have given name to the Dog River: the heavy surf beat out its purple masses into broad sheets of foam upon the beach, and there appeared to be no possibility of entering that secluded glen. For

a few moments we lay-to, waiting for a "seventh wave"; then out flew the oars, and, bowered in spray, upheaved upon a mountain-billow, we bounded over the bar—floating by a sudden and strange transition into the calm river out of the stormy sea.

We found here some officers of the *Vernon*, who had ridden round to meet us; their carpet was spread under the shade of spreading sycamores, and we were soon reposing upon it in placid enjoyment of our chibouques, while the Syrian servants bustled about, making preparation for the banquet. The horses were tethered in the shade, and our little boat lay moored by the silvery beach, over which a mountain cascade skipped, and laughed in concert with ourselves.

We dined merrily together on kid from the mountain, and omelettes made with herbs that grew wild about us; the wine was cooled in the cascade, and the coffee mingled its pleasant perfume with that of the aromatic shrubs on which it was boiling. Pipes, coffee, mountain-breezes, wildflowers' scents, superb scenery, sparkling torrents, neighing horses, the sea's deep roar, and a joyous party, made us think that the monks of the neighbouring convent might have pleasant times of it after all.

This was the site of the ancient Lycopolis, or Wolf-city: there are few or no remains of it except the aqueduct. On the rocks, however, that line the steep pathway, are some very curious figures and inscriptions, purporting that the warlike array

of the Egyptians, Persians, and Romans, had in their turn passed by.

Another day, I went to dine at some distance from Beyrout, with a British officer of distinguished birth and gallantry, who has married a Maronite lady of great beauty, and settled in her country. After an hour's gallop over the rocky promontory on which Beyrout is situated, through lanes of cactus and gardens alternating with sandy tracts and groups of pine-trees, I arrived at a picturesque cottage, commanding a noble view of the Lebanon. I was sitting on the divan with my courteous host, smoking our chibouques, and talking about England, when his bride entered, dressed in her beautiful Arabian costume and still more beautiful smiles. After dinner, which was dressed and served in Arab style, we adjourned to take our pipe and coffee on the house-top, where we passed a most pleasant hour.

The sun was setting in great glory on the sea, bathing the Lebanon in a flood of golden light. On each side of the peninsula on which we stood, two fine bays swept gracefully away to the right and left, till the eye reached Tripoli on the north, and Tyre on the south. The soft evening hour had brought out each Syrian family to their house-tops, and the gardens round were thickly inhabited; from every terraced roof rose the faint clouds of the chibouque; blue, red, and purple dresses glittered on every group that was gathered round us, with the veil-enfolded horns of the matrons, or the black tresses of the maidens sparkling with

golden coins. And the music of merry voices was heard from far and near, with sometimes a strain of song, or the tinkle of a guitar; the sea made its own solemn music on the distant shore, and the whole scene was one of perfect harmony, and peace, and beauty.

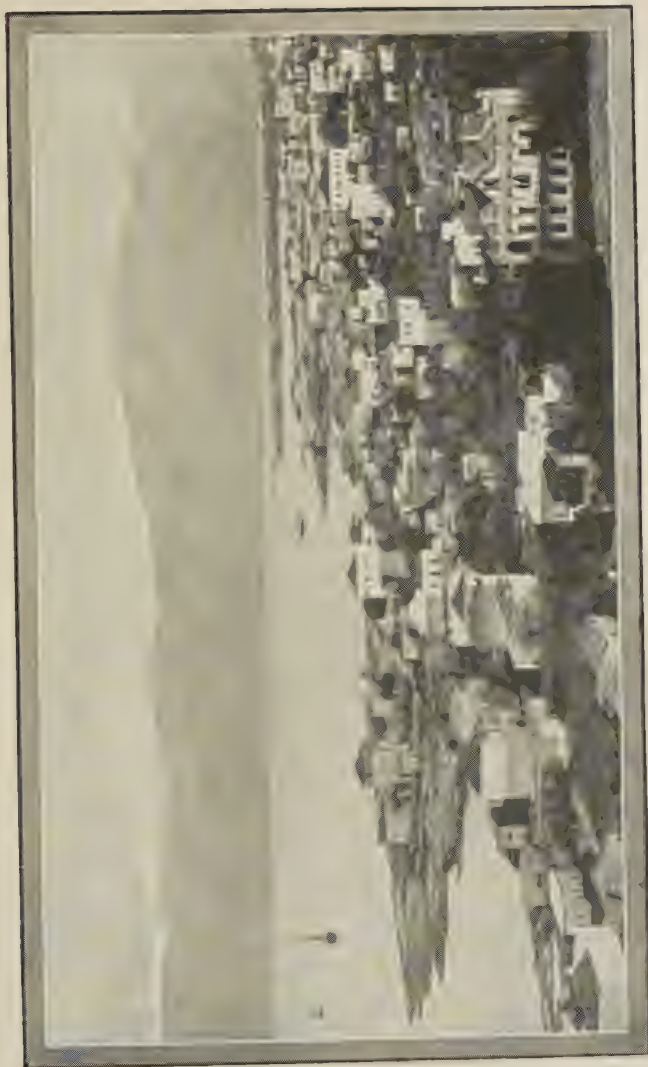
At Beyrout, however happily situated, I was only on the borders of the Holy Land, and considered every day lost that was deducted from my progress in the interior. On the 26th of May, I started for Jerusalem. It is the invariable practice in the East to make but a short journey the first day, encamping near the city, in order to supply the omission of any of the voluminous requisites of a style of travelling in which you carry your hotel with you. Being in light marching order, my little caravan consisted only of two luggage horses, besides my own animals: on one of these rode the muleteer with a faggot of pistols and daggers stuck in his capacious belt: his costume consisted of a red cap wrapped round with a Damascus shawl, a pair of petticoat trousers, red slippers, and a faded jacket covered with still more faded embroidery. The first horse carried the tent on one side, the canteen and cooking-apparatus on the other, and some portmanteaus in the middle: the second was covered with mats, cloaks, carpets, leathern water-bottles, and Yussef Joseph, the muleteer. My servant, a young Syrian Christian, was very handsome, with a dress resembling that of the muleteer, only of more elegant fashion and gaudier colours: he carried

a brace of pistols on the high pommel of his Turkish saddle, a formidable sabre by his side, and my gun slung over his shoulder. A spare turban for great occasions, and a change of such linen as he could carry in his pocket, were his only luggage, besides the ever-present arms and a water-bottle.

These men were my only companions for many weeks upon the road, except when a timid merchant or a wild Bedouin joined suspicious company for a mile or two, or a khan afforded a gossip and coffee for half an hour. I must not omit to mention, in the list of my companions, a docile Arab horse, the most useful, indefatigable, and only uncomplaining one amongst them all: I purchased him soon after my arrival in Syria; he had become as familiar as a dog during my stay at Beyrout, and when I was obliged to leave him ill at Jerusalem, I felt as if I was parting with a tried old friend. All the other horses were hired, and their forage provided by their owner, who generally made use of whatever fields we happened to encamp near for the purpose. He was a patient, good-tempered fellow, and preserved that character for strict honesty so peculiar to his class, amongst a nation of thieves.

Our way led along a narrow pathway, bordering on the sea as far as Beyrout, which we entered under a fortified gate where Turkish sentries were posted. The town itself is a confused labyrinth of lanes and alleys, that sometimes expand into a market-place, or at least some space wide enough

BEVERLY



to afford passage for two abreast. Towards the sea there are several cafés open in front, filled with sailors, Turks, and a few Syrians of the lower classes. There are also some mercantile houses here, whose clerks, bales of merchandise, and handbarrows, impart something of an European air to the quays. The streets are steep and ill-paved, or covered with flags, that afford uncertain footing even to an Arab horse. A strong-looking wall with battlements surrounds the town, and about ten thousand inhabitants.

Beyrout is situated on the isthmus of a finely undulated promontory: and, in the valley that lies between that promontory and the mountains, spreads one of the richest and most varied tracts of verdure in the world. Gardens, groves, the gleams of a winding river, white cottages half covered by creeping shrubs, lanes of flowering cactus, alternating tracts of yellow sands, and clumps of pine-trees, afford a delightful range for the searching eye; while the sea terminates each vista to the north and south, and the Lebanon towers grandly to the east. To the west, as we pass along this valley, are visible the houses of the resident Franks,¹ who add the comforts of the West to the picturesqueness and luxury of the East.

After proceeding for some time through a narrow lane, with hedges of thickly-clotted cactus, we emerged into the romantic pine-forest. An open space of bright soft sand shoots pathways in

¹ Europeans.

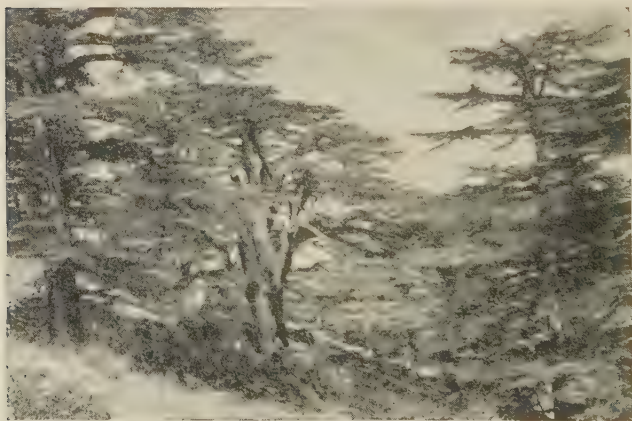
every direction through the shade, whose pleasant gloom soon terminates their vistas. At the foot of each old tree is a little circular carpet of verdure, looking at a distance like the shadow of its pine; the majestic groves of older growth, intermingled with the tender green of the young plantations, canopy the whole region around with a various and chequered shade. The caravans pass along noiselessly on the soft verdure or the yielding sand; not a sound is heard but that of the far-off sea, and the faint rustle of the branches. Through the deep foliage, a view of the impending Lebanon occasionally breaks; and cool breezes, that seem to have their home here, wander inquisitively about in each natural bower and shady nook.

About an hour from the city (we measure distance here by time), you pull up at a pretty khan, where a trough of water quenches your horse's glowing nostrils, and you can ask your way and light your pipe.¹ Thence by sandy paths or rocky tracts, through two or three flat-roofed villages, whose inhabitants sit spinning silk in the shade of rustic colonnades; and then we reach the shore, bordered by thick jungle, or rocky steeps. As the

¹ These *khans* afford a mere temporary shelter to travellers in this part of Syria, while in the south-east, and in Egypt, they are of immense extent, and form receptacles for whole caravans, that bring thither their own forage and provisions. In the latter case, they are frequently called "caravanserai"—"serai," or seraglio, meaning a *palace* or *large house*. In the former instance, of which I speak here, the khan is a sort of public-house, which generally supplies barley for horses; and pipes, coffee, sour milk, and water-melons for their riders. They are scattered along the road at about half-days' journeys, or from ten to fifteen miles apart.

sun went down we came to the river Damour, and encamped there for the night; our own tent and fire, and the stream that ran at our feet, supplying all our wants.

The next morning, as the sun rose over the Lebanon, we forded the river Damour, which runs into the sea from a beautiful valley among banks



CEDARS OF LEBANON

and islands thickly strewn with oleander. In about two hours I halted under the shade of a sycamore, to wait for some officers of the *Vernon*, who had promised to accompany me as far as Djouni, on my Jerusalem way. Near us was a khan, whence we procured barley and water for our horses, and eggs, milk, and fire for our cooking: mats and carpets were spread in the shade; macaroni and coffee boiling on a fire of dried branches;

and our horses feeding under the shelter of some olives—when a cheer was heard, and four sailors were seen galloping along the shore, impatient to rally round the fire whose smoke above the trees announced its friendly offices beneath. Ample justice being done to the banquet, we were soon in the saddle once more, and sweeping along over



FORTRESS OF SIDON

hill and vale, and rock, and sandy bay, until we came in sight of the venerable city of Sidon. Thence we turned off to the left towards the mountains, through mulberry and olive groves; passing by a pretty hamlet, and then along the banks of a river spanned with antique bridges, and overhung with pleasant shade.

The road, winding sometimes along a deep ravine, sometimes over a mountain's brow, was

nothing but a steep and rocky path, which in England a goat alone could be expected to travel. Our horses, however, went along it at a canter, though the precipice sometimes yawned beneath our outside stirrup, while the inner one knocked fire out of the rocky cliff, and the ground not unfrequently gave way the moment the hoof had left it, and plunged into the chasm far below.

The views were fine and various : deep, rich valleys, sprinkled occasionally with a flat-roofed cottage, a vineyard, or a mill ; a capricious stream, gliding or rushing along under its oleander shade : steep hills, speckled with grey crags, or overgrown with the bay-tree and the myrtle ; here and there, a town, with a very fortress-look, crowned some steep acclivity ; or a wood of sycamores gloomed over the pale rocks.

It was late when we came in sight of two high conical hills on one of which stands the village of Djouni.

CHAPTER II

SYRIA—MOUNT CARMEL AND JAFFA

TOWNS in the East are so disagreeable, and have so few resources, the country is so beautiful and full of interest, that I always felt a lively pleasure in passing out from the guarded gates of some old city to return to the tent and the wild pathway of the plain or mountain. Travel in the East is the occupation of your whole time, not a mere passage from one place of residence to another; the haunts of men soon become distasteful, and their habits irksome, to one accustomed to the wild freedom and perfect independence of an Eastern wanderer's life: the very hardships of the latter have a charm, and its dangers an excitement, all unknown to the European traveller.

You are wakened in the morning by the song of birds, which the sleeping ear, all regardless of the jackal's howl or the ocean's roar throughout the night, yet recognises as its expected summons. You fling off the rough capote (cloak), your only covering—start from the carpet, your only couch—and, with a plunge into the river or the sea, your toilet is made at once. The rainbow mists of morning are still heavy on the landscape while you sip your coffee; but by the time you spring

into the saddle all is clear and bright, and you feel, while you press the sides of your eager horse, and the stirring influence of morning buoys you up, as if fatigue could never come. The breeze, full of Nature's perfume and Nature's music, blusters merrily round your turban as you gallop to the summit of some hill to watch the Syrian sunrise spread in glory over Lebanon, Hermon, or Mount Carmel.

Meanwhile, your tent is struck; your various luggage packed upon the horses, with a completeness and celerity that only the wandering Arab can attain to, and a heap of ashes alone remains to mark the site of your transient home. Your cavalcade winds slowly along the beaten path, but you have many a castled crag, or woody glen, or lonely ruin to explore: and your untiring Arab courser seems ever fresh and vigorous as when he started. Occasionally you meet some traveller armed to the teeth, who inquires news of the road you have come, and perhaps relates some marvellous adventure from which he has just escaped. He bristles like a porcupine, with a whole armoury of pistols and daggers, but his first and parting salutation is that of "Peace!"—in no country of the world is that gentle word so often used, or so little felt.

Some khan, or convent, or bubbling spring marks your resting-place during the burning noon: and you are soon again in motion, with all the exhilaration of a second morning. Your path is as varied as your thoughts; now over slippery

crag, upon some view-commanding mountain's brow; now, along verdant valleys, or through some ravine, where the winter torrent was the last passenger. Oleanders ¹ in rich bloom are scattered over the green turf; your horse treads odours out of a carpet of wildflowers; strange birds of brilliant plumage are darting from bough to bough of the wild myrtle and the lemon-tree; lizards are gleaming among the rocks; and the wide sea is so calm, and bright, and mirror-like, that the solitary ship upon its bosom seems suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between two skies.

All this time you are travelling in the steps of prophets, conquerors, and apostles; perhaps along the very path which the Saviour trod. "What is yonder village?" "Nazareth." "What yonder lake?" "The sea of Galilee." Only he who has heard these answers from a native of Palestine can understand their thrilling sound.

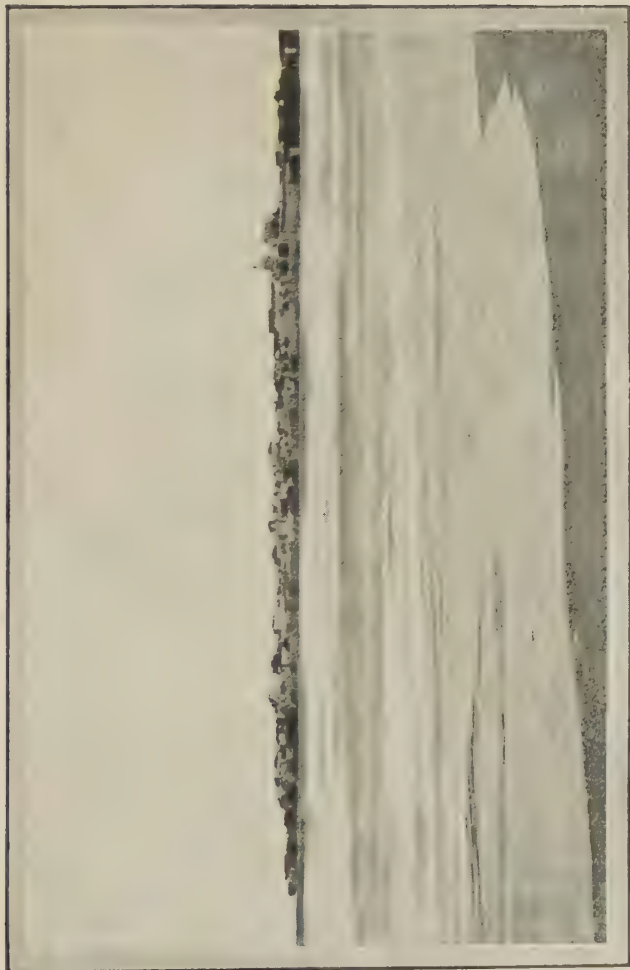
But evening approaches; your horse's step is as free, but less elastic than fourteen hours ago. Some wayside khan or village presents itself for the night's encampment; but, more frequently, a fountain or a river's bank is the only inducement that decides you to hold up your hand: suddenly, at that sign, the horses stop; down comes the luggage; and, by the time you have unbridled and watered your horse, a carpet is spread on the green turf, and a fire is already blazing. As you fling yourself on the hard couch of earth with a

¹ Poisonous evergreen shrubs, bearing fine red and white flowers.

sensation of luxury, one of your attendants presents you with the soothing chibouque, while another hands a tiny cup of coffee; this at once restores tone to your system, and enables you to look out upon the lovely sunset with absorbing satisfaction.

Meanwhile, your tent has risen silently over you; the baggage is arranged in a crescent form round the door; the horses are picketed in front. Your simple meal is soon despatched, and a quiet stroll by moonlight concludes the day. Then, wrapped in your capote, you fling yourself once more upon your carpet, place your pistols under your saddle pillow, and are soon lost in such sleep as only the care-free traveller knows.

I had been only three hours in Acre, but the transition from its melancholy streets to the open country was delightful. I rode past St. George's Mount, and forded the little river Belus, whence the route lay among shrubberies of valonidis and laurustinus, and by the banks of "that ancient river, the river Kishon." We read of this brook drowning many fugitives in the discomfiture of Sisera's host; and of similar performances on its part after the Turks were defeated by the French at Mount Tabor; now, it runs meekly and unostentatiously into the sea, not six yards wide, and scarcely reaching to the horses' knees. A fine avenue of sycamores partly shades the path to Caiffa, a pretty, little, gaily-bazaared town, which we traversed; and, after some steep climbing, arrived at the summit of Mount Carmel, where the promontory looks out upon the sea.

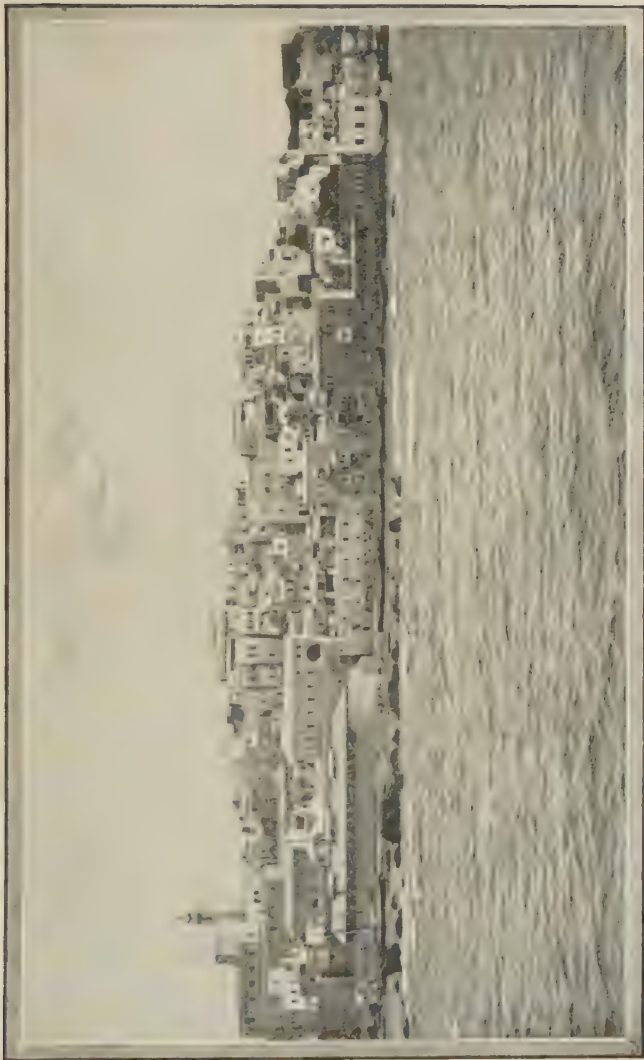


The view from here is very grand, but somewhat saddening, from the loneliness and want of cultivation that everywhere meet the eye—an immense expanse of ocean, unenlivened by a single sail; wide tracts of land, unchequered by a village; and, at the base of the mountain, a few half-bald corn-fields, and some olive and sycamore trees. The “excellency of Carmel” is indeed “departed”; but there is still much that is romantic and interesting in the character of the mountain and the view that it commands. Beyond the beautiful bay to the north, the town and fortress of Acre stands boldly out into the sea; on the south, the extensive ruins of Castel Pelegrino and a wild range of mountains bound the horizon.

* * * * *

The second morning dawned on a long, low, sandy shore, terminated by a small promontory, on which stood Jaffa among its green gardens—looking cool, pleasant, and welcoming, contrasted with the surrounding desert and the foaming sea. Its harbour is a miserable little enclosure of rocks, which breaks the force of the Mediterranean waves, and just enables one to disembark. My horse was lifted out, and lay motionless on the sands, with the spray beating over him; it was an hour before he was able to stand and follow me, which he did like a dog, up the steep streets of this dreary town.

The town is a labyrinth of khans, convents, narrow lanes, deserted ruins, and waste places, with a few dingy streets leading from one wretched



JAFFA

quarter to another. There are no such things as stables in these parts, so I was forced to put up my horse in a vaulted passage half blocked by the ruins of a castle. The Franciscan convent is spacious enough to shelter one thousand men, and at Easter, and other seasons of pilgrimage, is often quite full; it contains an immense number of courts, house-tops, galleries, terraces, and corridors, with narrow, dirty, whitewashed cells for us—pilgrims.

In the evening I went out, like all the Joppaites of ancient and modern times, to enjoy the cool breeze upon the house-top; and, looking over the flat-roofed city, saw its various surfaces all alive, and sprinkled with gaily-dressed Syrians, for here even the Christians wear the Eastern habit. The superior of the convent sat with me for some time, and professed to point out the house-top whereon St. Peter prayed. This establishment is occupied only by four Spanish Franciscans, whose duty it is to receive and cherish pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

The next morning I visited our Consular agent, a civil old Arab, who told me I had better wait for a caravan, or take an escort to Jerusalem, as the road was just then very unsafe. This is an almost invariable observation in Syria, made by every one in authority to every traveller who inquires his way. Having smoked his pipe and declined his offers of service, I rode forth upon my crippled horse, whose native spirit soon flung off his weariness; and stepping out as proudly as

ever, he seemed endeavouring to disguise his stiffness. The town appeared much better this morning; the bazaars and markets seemed full of business, and looked very gay, with Syrian silks and shining arms, and a profusion of fruits, flowers, and vegetables. The fortifications are rather respectable for an Eastern town, consisting of a wide ditch, a covered way, and a glacis¹ together with bastions and battlements along the walls. Jaffa made an honourable resistance to Bonaparte, and only 3800 troops were left to surrender as prisoners of war, trusting to the Faith of Mercy, which the deluded infidels supposed was professed by their godless invaders; they were butchered to a man in cold blood upon the following day.

The gateway was now filled with Turkish soldiers, and opened on a vacant space between it and the drawbridge, presenting a very picturesque appearance: in front is a handsome marble fountain, engraved with many pious Arabic inscriptions, which recommend the traveller as he quaffs the stream, to bless the Giver of it. An arcade of thickly-clustering vines shaded the enclosure, round which were recesses thronged with a gowned and bearded multitude, smoking and chatting gravely, or playing chess intently. Groups of picturesque and dark-eyed girls displayed the most graceful attitudes as they bent to fill their water-jars, or balanced them daintily on their veiled heads.

A broad sandy path leads from the town through rich gardens, shaded by cypresses and mimosas,

¹ *i. e.* the bank sloping down from the fort.

and hedged with gigantic cactus, to another handsome fountain, and an open space sheltered by palms : under these, several parties of travellers, with their kneeling camels and their little fires, were luxuriously resting. After some three miles, the road opened upon the wide Plain of Sharon, sprinkled with the iris, wild tulip, and almost every flower, except its own peculiar rose.

The Hill-country of Judea lay before us in a faint blue ridge ; the plains of Ascalon extended on the right ; the high tower of Rama appeared in the distance ; and the next evening we were to rest at **JERUSALEM !**¹

The scenery resembled that of the wildest glens of Scotland, only that here the grey crags were thickly tufted with aromatic shrubs ; and, instead of the pine, the sycamore, the olive, and the palm shaded the mountain's side.

We passed by the village of Jeremiah, and "the Terebinthine Vale." In the last we recognise the scene of David's combat with Goliath, and its little brook still sparkles here as freshly as when he picked pebbles thence to smite the Philistine. Generally speaking, the river beds were as dry as the path we trod, and this was the only stream but

¹ The vast plains that lie between the Hill-country and the sea are very partially cultivated ; but the luxuriant corn and rich grass that grow wild prove how readily it can bring forth abundance, and that it is upon the inhabitants and not upon the soil that the curse still lies. Once twenty millions of people, it is said, dwelt in plenty and prosperity, where now some 1,800,000 find a scanty sustenance. The more I see of Turkish rule, the more admirably does that rule appear adapted to accomplish a denouncing prophecy.

one that I saw between Jaffa and the Jordan. A large caravan was assembled on its banks, with all its picturesque variety of laden camels, mules with gay trappings, mountain cavaliers with turban and embroidered vest, veiled women on donkeys, half-naked Arabs with long spears, dwellers in cities with dark kaftan, or furred pelisse. All, however various their nation, profession, or appearance, were eagerly quaffing the precious stream, or waiting under the "shadow of a high rock" for the caravan to proceed.

The hills became more and more precipitous as we approached Jerusalem; most of them were of a conical form, and terraced to their summit. Yet, on these steep acclivities, the strenuous labour of the Israelite had formerly grown corn, and wine and oil; and, on the terraces that remained uninjured, the few present inhabitants still plant wheat, and vineyards, and olive groves. There was no appearance of water, except the inference that might be drawn of wells within the few villages that hung upon the mountain's side.

The pathway continued as rough as ever, while we wound through the rocky defiles leading to the upper plains; but it was much more frequented, and I had joined a large and various company, for the sake of listening to their talk about the city that now absorbed every other interest. At each acclivity we surmounted, we were told that the next would reveal to us the object of our destination; and at length, as we merged upon a wide and sterile plain, the leading pilgrims sank

upon their knees—a contagious shout of enthusiasm burst from the excited wanderers; and every man of that large company—Arab, Italian, Greek, and Englishman—exclaimed—each in his own tongue—“ El Khuds ! ” “ Gerusalemma ! ” “ Hagiopolis ! ”
“ THE HOLY CITY ! ”

CHAPTER III

JERUSALEM

IT was indeed JERUSALEM—and, had the Holy City risen before us in its palmiest days of magnificence and glory, it could not have created deeper emotion, or been gazed at more earnestly or with intenser interest.

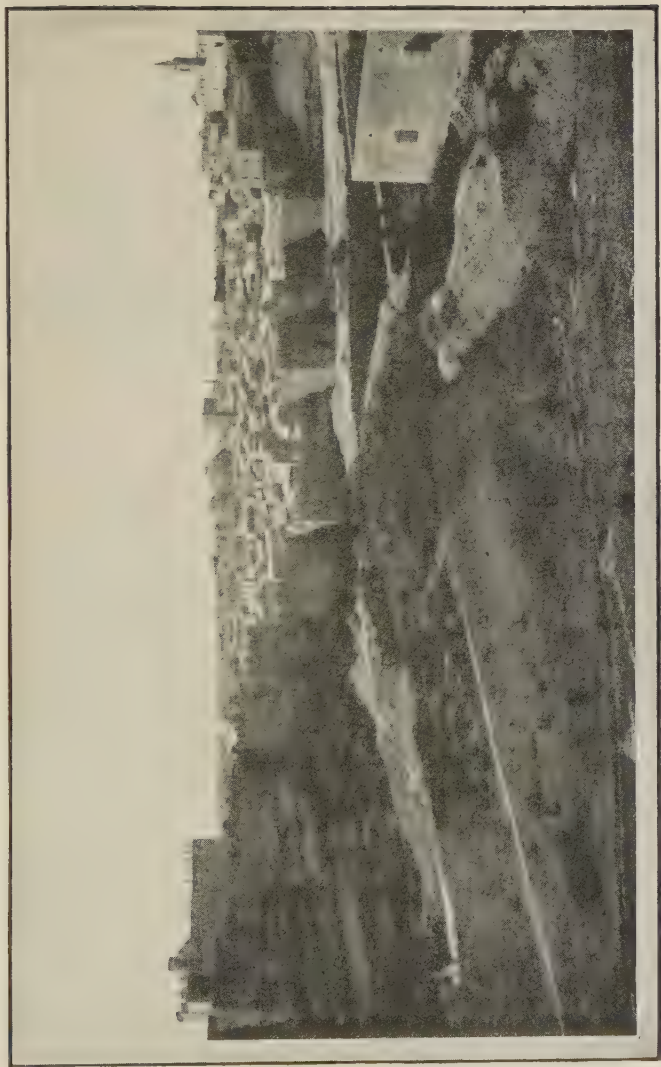
So long the object of eager hope and busy imagination, it stood before me at length in actual reality—the city of David, the chosen seat of God, the death-place of His Son, the object of the world's pilgrimage for two thousand years! All its history, so strangely blended with holiness and crime, with prosperity and desolation, with triumph and despair, and a thousand associations, came thronging into recollection, peopling its towers and surrounding plains with the scenes and actors of long, eventful years. These feelings I shared in common with the humblest pilgrim that was kneeling there, and, in some respects, he had even the advantage of me; he had made infinitely greater sacrifices than I had done, and undergone far heavier toils to reach that bourne—*he* only saw the sacred spot wherein the Prophets preached, and David sung, and Christ had died.

The whole cavalcade paused simultaneously

when Jerusalem appeared in view; the greater number fell upon their knees, and laid their foreheads in the dust, whilst a profound silence, more impressive than the loudest exclamations, prevailed over all: even the Moslems gazed reverently on what was to them also a holy city, and recalled to mind the pathetic appeal of their forefather—"Hast thou not a blessing for me also, O my Father?"

When the crusading army, thinned by pestilence, privation, and many a battle-field, gazed upon the view before us, that warrior-host knelt down as a single man; sobs burst from their mailed bosoms, and tears streamed down their rugged cheeks. Those tears, and not the blood so profusely shed upon the plains of Palestine, were the true evidences of the Crusading spirit.

Apart from all associations, the first view of Jerusalem is a most striking one. A brilliant and unchequered sunshine has something mournful in it, when all that it shines upon is utterly desolate and drear. Not a tree or green spot is visible; no sign of life breaks the solemn silence; no smile of Nature's gladness ever varies the stern scenery around. The flaming, monotonous sunshine above, and the pale, distorted, rocky wastes beneath, realise but too faithfully the prophetic picture—"Thy sky shall be brass, and thy land shall be iron." To the right and left, as far as the eye can reach, vague undulations of colourless rocks extend to the horizon. A broken and desolate plain in front is bounded by a wavy, battlemented wall,



JERUSALEM, FROM THE NORTH

over which towers frown, and minarets peer, and mosque-domes swell, intermingled with church-turrets and an indistinguishable mass of terraced roofs. High over the city, to the left, rises the Mount of Olives; and the distant hills of Moab almost mingling with the sky, afford a background to the striking picture.

There was something startlingly new and strange in that wild, shadowless landscape; the clear outlines of the hills, and the city walls—so colourless, yet so well defined against the naked sky—gave to the whole a most unreal appearance.

I am not sure that this stern scenery did not present the only appearance that would not disappoint expectation. It is unlike anything else on earth—so blank to the eye, yet so full of meaning to the heart; every mountain round is familiar to the memory; even yon blasted fig-tree has its voice, and the desolation that surrounds us bears silent testimony to fearful experiences. The plain upon which we stand looks like the arena of deadly struggles in times gone by—struggles in which all the mighty nations of the earth took part, and in which Nature herself seems to have shared.

Each of our party had waited for the other to finish his devotions, and seemed to respect each pilgrim's feelings with a Christian courtesy, perhaps inspired by the spot. At length, all had risen from their genuflexions and prostrations, and we moved slowly forward over the rugged yet slippery path which human feet had worn in the solid rock. Countless had been the makers of that path

—Jebusites, Hebrews, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, Romans, Saracens, Crusaders, and pilgrims from every country under heaven. As we advanced, some olive-trees appeared, and deep valleys on the left, slightly marked with pale, green gardens. An enclosure concealed the prospect for a while, and then again the City of Zion appeared, shadowing with its battlemented walls the barren rocks. As we approached, nothing but these walls were visible, presenting, probably, with their massive gates and lofty towers, the same appearance as they wore to the Crusader's view : here and there a turbaned head was visible, and the Crescent banner was waving from David's tower ; a few tents, green, white, and blue, were scattered round, as if forsaken in a hurry ; and all else looked as if it had been laid waste in order to afford no shelter to an enemy.

I had always pictured to myself Jerusalem as standing upon lofty hills, and visible from afar. It is, on the contrary, on the edge of the wide platform by which we approach from Jaffa, and is commanded by the Mount of Olives, the Hill of Scopas, and other eminences, from which it is divided by the deep and narrow ravines called the valley of Jehoshaphat and the Vale of Hinnom. These ravines meet in the form of a Y, the lower part of which describes the precipitous glen through which the brook Kedron flows in winter to the Dead Sea.

The site of the city is in itself unique ; selected originally from the strength of its position only,

it offers none of the features usually to be found surrounding the metropolis of a powerful people. No river nor any stream flows by; no fertility surrounds it, no commerce is able to approach its walls, no thoroughfare of nations it finds in the way. It seems to stand apart from the world, exempt from its passions, its ambitions, and even its prosperity. Like the high-priest who once ministered in its temple, it stands solitary, and removed from all secular influences, and receives only those who come to worship at its mysteries. All the other cities of the earth are frequented by votaries of gain, science, luxury, or glory; Zion offers only privations to the pilgrim's body, solemn reflection for his thoughts, awe for his soul; her palaces are ruins, her hostels are dreary convents, her chief boast and triumph is a sepulchre.

After some resistance from the Turkish sentinels, I entered the Pilgrims' Gate under a lofty archway, and found myself in Jerusalem !

On the left within the walls is a waste place strewn with ruins, and containing a broken cistern, called the "Pool of Bathsheba"; on the right is pointed out the Hill of Zion, whereon "David's tower" maintains its ground in tradition, if not in truth. From this open space three streets, or rather roads (for they are almost houseless), branch off; that to the left leads to Calvary and the convent of the Terra Santa (Holy Land); that to the right to Mount Zion, the English church, and Armenian convent; and that straight onward,

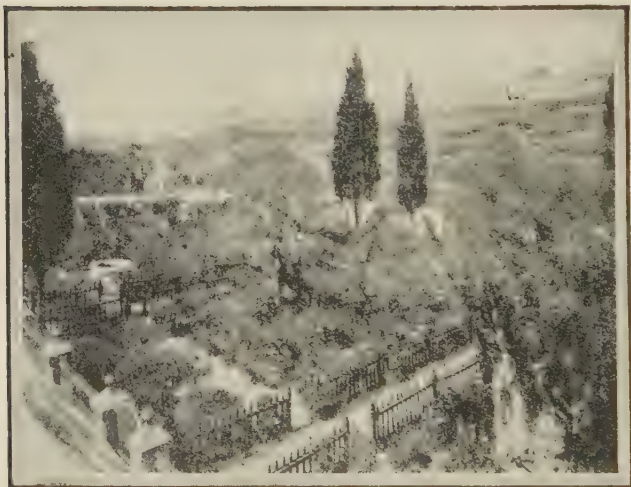
to Mount Moriah, where stands the Mosque of Omar and the collection of villages that is called the city.

I betook myself to the hospice of the Latin convent, where I found a whitewashed cell and an iron bedstead at my disposal. It was dismal enough; but long travel under a Syrian sun prevents one from feeling fastidious, and it ill becomes a pilgrim to complain on Calvary.

The convent, whose guest I now found myself, is the wealthiest and most influential of all those situated in Palestine. It is called by distinction *the* Convent of the Holy Land, and has possessions handed down from the times of Godfrey de Bouillon (the Crusader). The other Latin convents in Syria pay deference to this, the chief guardian of the Holy Sepulchre.

Mounting a fresh horse, I repassed the gate by which I had entered on the southern side, and, with no guide but memory, rode forth to make a circuit of the city, "to walk round about her, and mark well her battlements." Sadly has all been changed since this proud challenge was spoken, yet the walls are still towering and imposing in their effect. They vary in height from twenty to sixty feet, according to the undulations of the ground; and are everywhere in good repair. The columns and architraves (at least as old as the Roman-conquered city), that are worked into these walls instead of ruder stones, bear eloquent testimony to the different nature of their predecessors. A bridle-path leads close to their base all round; the

valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat yawn suddenly beneath them on the west, south, and north, separating them from Mount Gihon, the Hill of Evil Counsel, and the Mount of Olives. These hills are utterly barren, and lonely as fear can make them. Though within gunshot of the city,



GETHSEMANE

robberies are here committed with impunity, and few people venture to leave the walls without being well armed and attended.

The deep gloom of the Valley of Hinnom; the sterility of all around; the silence and desolation so intense, yet so close to the city; the sort of *memory* with which I could trace each almost familiar spot, from the Tower of Hippicus to the Hill of Scopas, made this the most interesting

excursion I ever undertook. Now we look down upon the Pool and Valley of Gihon from the summit of Mount Zion; now upon the Vale of Hinnom, with the Pool of Siloam, and Aceldama beyond the brook; now over Mount Moriah, with the Valley of Jehoshaphat beneath, and the village of Siloam on the opposite side, scattered along the banks where Kedron used to flow. Then, passing through the Turkish cemetery and over the brook Kedron, we come to the venerable Garden of Gethsemane, in which, say the legends, still stand the olive-trees that sheltered Christ. This garden is only a small grove, occupying perhaps two acres of ground, but it is one of the best authenticated scenes of interest about Jerusalem. From it a steep and rocky path leads to the three summits of the Mount of Olives, on the loftiest of which stands the Church of the Ascension. An Armenian priest admitted me into the sacred enclosure, motioned to a little monk to lead about my horse, and led the way in silence to the roof of the church. From hence is the most interesting, if not the most striking, view in the world.

From such a summit might the great Leader of the People have viewed the land which was to be the reward of their desert wanderings. From it, is laid bare every fibre of the great heart of Palestine. The atmosphere is like a crystal lens, and every object in the Holy City is as clear as if it lay within a few yards', instead of a mile's distance. Each battlement upon those war-worn walls, each wildflower that clusters over them, is visible : the

dogs prowling about the waste places among the ruins, and cactus, and cypress; the turbaned citizens slowly moving in the streets; all are



JERUSALEM : THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, FROM THE NORTH-EAST

recognisable almost as clearly as the prominent features of the city.

The eminence called Mount Moriah lies nearest to our view, just above the narrow valley of Jehoshaphat. The city wall passes over the centre of it, embracing a wide enclosure, studded with cypresses and cedars, in the centre of which

stands the magnificent Mosque of Omar. This is of a very light, fantastic architecture, bristling with points, and little spires and minarets; many of these have gilded crescents that flash and gleam in the sunshine; while the various groups of Moslems, sitting on bright carpets, or slowly wandering among the groves, give life and animation to the scene. The Mosque occupies the site of the Temple, and is held holy by the Moslem as the spot whereon Abraham offered Isaac for a sacrifice.

To the left of the mosque-enclosure, within the walls, is a space covered with rubbish and jungles of the prickly pear; then part of the Hill of Zion, and David's Tower. To the right of the enclosure is the Pool of Bethesda, beyond which St. Stephen's Gate affords entrance to the Road of Sorrow, a steep and winding street along which Christ bore the Cross in his ascent to Calvary. To the right of this street, and towards the north, stands the hill of Acra, on which Salem, the most ancient part of the city, was built, they say, by Melchisedek. This hill is enclosed by the walls of the modern town; but the hill of Bezetha lies yet further to the right, and was enclosed within the walls that the Romans stormed. Beyond Bezetha stands the Hill of Scopus, wherefrom Titus gazed upon Jerusalem, the day before its destruction, and wept for the sake of the beautiful city.

But from the Hill on which *we* stand, One other also wept over that fated city. No conquering armies lay around it then; luxury and plenty

revelled among its marble palaces ; there was then large hope on earth, and a new hope just dawned that lighted up the dark passage of the grave, and showed through its narrow vista a glorified image of that city so dear to its inhabitants—a new Jerusalem. In vain that hope ! The indomitable Jew had once before impatiently rejected God as his king, and demanded a being like himself “to reign over him” : he now refused to listen to Him, albeit of the house of David, who by his own confession “spake as never man spake” ; and even, in his perverseness, boasted “that he had no king but Cæsar.” *Then*, indeed, “did the sceptre depart from Israel.” Foreign banners might wave upon her towers, foreign tyrants might grind her with oppression ; but a nation never can know slavery until its SPIRIT is voluntarily bowed beneath the yoke.

Whatever beauty may have distinguished the city in the day of its evil pride, there is little now within the wide enclosure of its walls to claim an interest, except the unchangeable hills on which it stands. Here and there is a cluster of flat-roofed buildings, then a space bewildered with weeds and ruins ; here is a busy street, with vines sheltering its bazaars, and coloured crowds streaming through it ; and there is a deserted garden, with a few dreary olive-trees and cypresses shading its burnt soil ; here is a mosque, with its heavy dome and its pert minarets ; and there is the capacious church that covers the Holy Sepulchre.

The eye wanders away with a feeling of relief

BETHANY



from this most mournful city to the wide, strange prospect that surrounds it. Far to the south, we look over the barren but magnificent hills of Judah, with vistas through their rocky glens of the rich valley of the Jordan, and the calm, green waters of the Dead Sea, whose surface gleams on either side of a foreground formed by the lofty village of Bethany. Beyond Jordan and the Sea of the Plain, the mountains of the Moabites tower into the clear blue sky, and are reflected in brown and purple shadows on their own dark, mysterious Lake.

Beneath us is the Garden of Gethsemane, the Valley of Hinnom with its Tophet, and the Vale of Jehoshaphat with its brook Kedron, which meets the waters of Siloam at the Well of Job. The Tombs of the Kings, of Nehemiah, of Absalom, and of the Judges, lie before us; the caves of the Prophets everywhere pierce the rocks, that have so often resounded to the war-cry of the Chaldean, the Roman, the Saracen, and the Crusader. Beyond the city spreads the Vale of Rephaim, with Bethlehem in the distance: every rock, and hill, and valley that is visible bears some name that has rung in history. And then the utter desolation that everywhere prevails—as if all was over with that land, and the “rocks had indeed fallen, and the hills indeed had covered” the mighty, the beautiful and the brave, who once dwelt there in prosperity and peace. No flocks, no husbandman, nor any living thing is there, except a group of timid travellers—turbaned figures, and veiled women, and a file of camels—winding along the

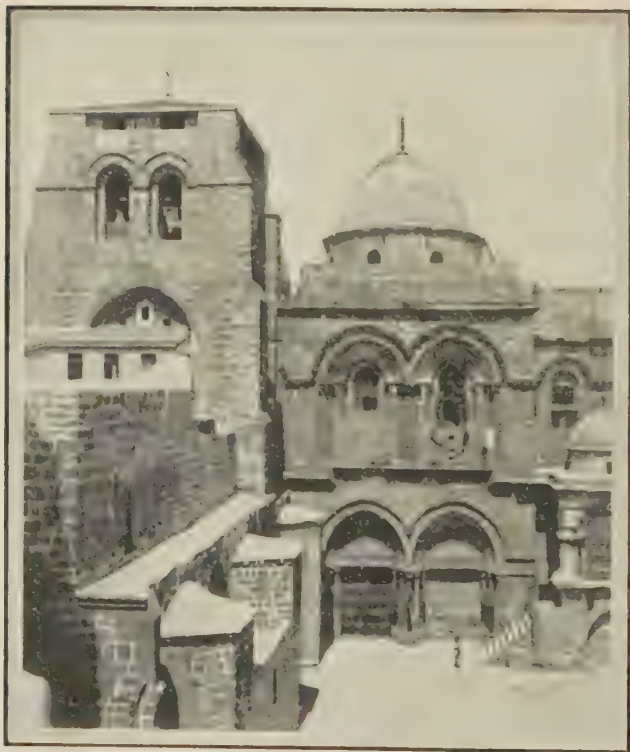
precipitous pathway under the shadows of the palms.

Descending from the Mount of Olives, I re-entered the city by St. Stephen's Gate, where Turkish soldiers constantly keep guard; turning to the left, I visited the Pool of Bethesda, and then wandered slowly along the Road of Sorrow, in which is pointed out each spot where the Saviour fell under the burden of the Cross, as He bore it to Calvary along this steep and rugged way.

In after days I impatiently traversed the squalid city, with a monk for my guide, in search of its various localities of traditionary sanctity; but I will not ask the reader to stoop to such a labour. My monkish guide pointed out to me where Dives lived, where Lazarus lay, where the cock crowed or roosted that warned Peter of his crime, and even where the blessed Virgin used to wash her son's linen. It is difficult to speak of such things gravely; and yet I would not have one light feeling or expression intermingled with the solemn subjects of which this chapter attempts to treat; the pilgrim who can scoff within the walls of Jerusalem does his heart as little justice,

The character of the city within corresponds with that of the country without. Most of it is very solitary and silent; echo answers to your horse's tread; frequent waste places, among which the wild dog prowls, convey an indescribable impression of desolation; and it is not only these waste places that give such an air of loneliness to the city, but many of the streets themselves, dark,

dull, and mournful-looking, seem as if the Templars' armed tread were the last to which they had resounded. The bazaars and places of business are



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

confined to one small quarter of the city; everywhere else you generally find yourself alone. No one is even there to point out your way; and you come unexpectedly upon the Pool of Bethesda, or

wander among the vaulted ruins of the Hospitallers' courts without knowing it. The remains of the ancient city that meet your eye are singularly few; here and there a column is let into the wall, or you find that the massive and uneven pavement is of costly marble; but, except the Pools of Hezekiah and Bethesda, the Tower of Hippicus, and some few other remains preserved on account of their utility, there is little of art to assist the memory to the Past.

The chief place of interest in Jerusalem is the Holy Sepulchre, whose site I believe to be as real, as the panorama that the priests have gathered round it must needs be false. You descend by a narrow lane and a flight of steps into a small enclosure, where a guard of Turkish soldiers is stationed to keep peace among the Christians. After paying tribute to this infidel police, you enter into a large circular hall, supported by a colonnade of eighteen pillars, and surrounded by a large dome, in the centre of which is a pavilion containing the Holy Sepulchre. The whole of this church has been so frequently described, that I shall only mention that within its walls are condensed an array of all the events incidental to the crucifixion—the place where Christ was scourged; the hole in the rock where the Cross stood; the fissure where the rock was rent in twain; the place where the soldiers cast lots for the garments; the stone whereon the body was anointed, and lastly, the grave wherein it was laid.

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Often have I wandered among the desolate enclosures of Jerusalem by the moon's mournful light, that seemed to harmonise with the ruins round : the streets were silent as the grave ; the night-wind, like a wailing spirit, alone wandered through the forsaken shrines, or sighed among the cypress and the palm-trees that towered against the dark blue sky : but sometimes the howl of the wild dog struck upon the ear ; and more than once I was startled by the voice of a poor Scotch maniac exclaiming in passionate accents, " Woe ! woe ! woe to Zion ! "

At Easter, the pilgrims assemble in thousands to visit the Jordan. The Arabs know this season as well as the sportsman does the 1st of September, and assemble in tribes along the road to Jericho in the hope of booty. The Turkish governor always sends a guard with each caravan, aware of the importance of pilgrims to Jerusalem, and willing to afford facility to this, as to any other enterprise conducive to the revenue.

It is an imposing sight to witness that long array of pilgrims winding through the gloomy Passes of the Judean hills, with the bright sunshine flashing on the bristling spears of the Bedouin, and the gorgeous trappings of the Albanian cavalry ; the long necks of the camels peering high over the mass, and the eager, huddling movement of the timorous crowd. Woe to the poor pilgrim who lags behind, or is overtaken at nightfall on the outskirts of the camp ! They are vigilantly beset by the children of Ishmael, who consider the privilege of robbing

as being theirs by Divine right. "God," say they, "gave to Isaac the land of Canaan, but to Ishmael the Desert, and all that is found thereon."

Arrived at the Jordan, the pilgrims rush into the deep and rapid river, with such enthusiasm that they are not unfrequently carried away by it, and drowned. The Greek and Latin church has each its peculiar spot where Christ was baptized, as well as its peculiar Easter; so they never interfere with each other here, as in the Holy Sepulchre. The leader of the troops only allows a certain time for the immersion, and then re-forms his caravan to return to Jerusalem.

In the valley of the Jordan, there is much wood, and there were formerly many palms: here each pilgrim cuts himself a staff, and is thenceforth a "palmer," or one whose pilgrimage is accomplished.

The Turks have a garrison in Jerusalem of about eight hundred soldiers. The surrounding country, nominally under their authority, is in fact ravaged by the Bedouin up to the very walls of Jerusalem, and the different villages look only to themselves for protection. Jerusalem is ill-adapted at present for a military post; it is commanded by the Mount of Olives, the Hill of Evil Counsel, and the Hill of Scopas, within half cannon-shot. Its supply of water is very limited, and depends in summer altogether upon tanks: Kedron has long ceased to flow during the warm months, and wells are unknown. The road from Jaffa is almost impassable for artillery, and affords unequalled facilities for guerilla troops to fight, and cut off supplies.

Jerusalem is about forty miles from the sea, and twenty-four from the Jordan. There is very little wheat grown, and very few cattle fed in its neighbourhood. Its present population of about 12,000 souls finds a very scanty subsistence, and have no commerce whatever to assist them. Alms and pilgrims are the principal, if not the only sources of wealth. The Jews, Latins, and Greeks, are entirely dependent on such resources.

CHAPTER IV

BETHLEHEM AND THE DEAD SEA

I

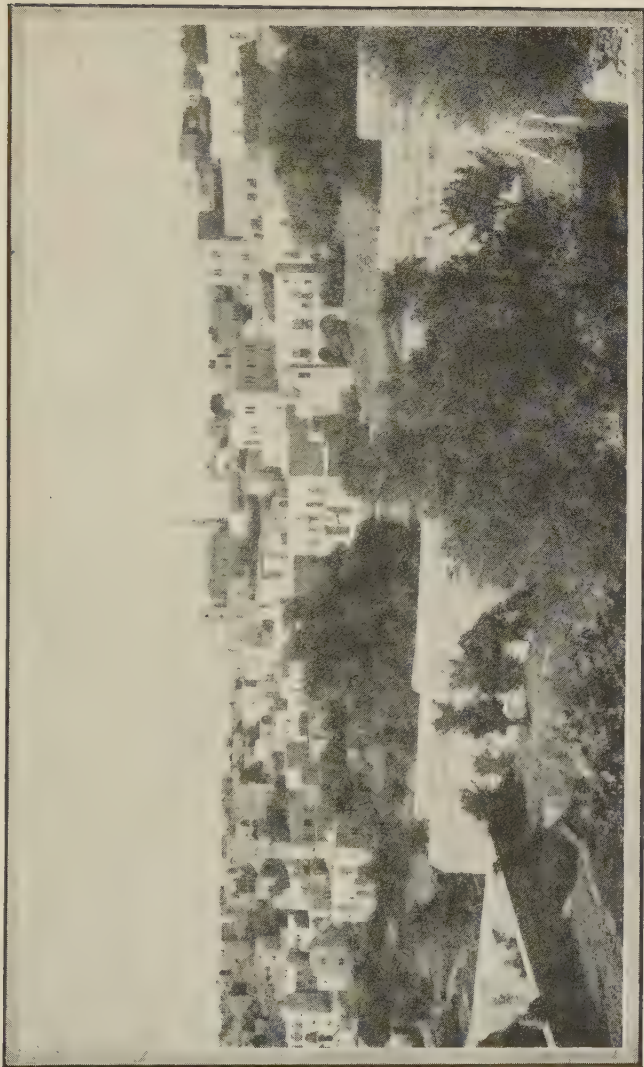
I FELT little inclination to linger at Jerusalem after I had explored the localities prescribed, and such as I had selected for myself. It was now mid-summer; and the sun, reflected from the white walls and marble pavement, seemed to surround me with a fiery glow. The very zephyrs were so languid from the heat that they refused any longer to wander through the streets, narrow as these are made, in order to stimulate their energies: the scorched leaves had no quiver; the living city was more silent under the noontide sun than at midnight; and the whole world seemed to be gradually growing red-hot. I felt escape was absolutely necessary, and prepared to avail myself of an invitation from our bishop to Bethlehem, where he had been staying for some time.

The distance is about five miles; the way lies, for the most part, over arid and dreary hills, with here and there a scanty crop of wheat in the intervening valleys, and an occasional herd of goats browsing invisible herbage, under the guardianship of a herdsman shaggy as his flock, and as brown and bare as the rocks around him.

Occasionally we catch glimpses of the wild mountain scenery that wraps the Dead Sea in its barren bosom. No other landscape in the world is like this—distorted piles of cinereous hills, with that Dead Sea lying among them like melted lead, unlighted even by the sunshine that is pouring so vertically down as to cast no shadow. After passing the convent of Mar Elyas, on a hill upon the left, and the tomb of Rachel, in a valley on the right, the scenery becomes more attractive; some olive groves, intermingled with small vineyards, clothe the hills; rich corn-fields are in the valleys: and lo!—as we round a rugged projection in the path—Bethlehem stands before us!

This little city, as it is called by courtesy, has an imposing appearance—walled round, and commanding a fertile valley from a rugged eminence. I rode through steep and rocky streets, that were crowded with veiled and turbaned figures in their gala dresses (for it was a festival), and was much struck by the apparent cleanliness and comfort of this little Christian colony. Ibrahim Pasha, hearing complaints of quarrels between its Christian and Moslem inhabitants, and finding that the former were more numerous, impartially ordered the latter to emigrate; so that Bethlehem is now almost exclusively Christian.

The reader may smile; but it was with something like grave respect I looked upon each carpenter in Bethlehem; the very donkeys assumed an additional interest; and the cross with which they are so singularly marked, a meaning: the camels



BETHLEHEM

seemed as if they had just come from the East with gifts, and the palm-tree offered its branches to strew the holy ground; every shepherd appeared to have a mystic character; and, when "night came with stars," I almost looked for His, and tried to trace it over Bethlehem.



CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, SHOWING ENTRANCE TO THE GROTTTO

The chapel of the Nativity is a subterranean grotto, into which you descend through darkness that gives way to the softened light of silver lamps suspended from the roof.

After visiting this chapel and the Church of St. Helena, I hastened to pay my respects to our bishop, whom I found in the refectory: I shall long remember with grateful pleasure the evening I passed

in that Armenian Convent, where his kindness and piety appeared to have conciliated towards him the affection and respect of all the monks. It was a striking sight that ancient refectory, gloomy with carved panelling and painted glass, occupied only by the prelate of a foreign creed, and the fair girl, his daughter, who sat beside him. As the dark-robed monks passed by the grating that separated the refectory from the corridor, each laid his hand upon his heart, and made a graceful reverence, with his eyes still fixed upon the ground.

After dinner, as there was still half an hour of daylight, and a bright moonlight to fall back upon, I mounted my horse, and, accompanied only by my dragoman, rode forth to the Pools of Solomon, about six miles distant, on the road to Hebron. This neighbourhood has a bad character, and I was warned more than once of danger from the Arabs, but I had so often received similar intimations that I now heard them as mere common-places. In the hurry of departure, my servant had come away from the convent unarmed, but he cantered along after me as cheerfully as if clad in panoply, and seemed to consider a small bottle that peeped suspiciously from his holsters as a good substitute for more offensive weapons.

We pushed forward at a gallop over a wild and rocky tract, where the pathway was scarcely visible among the fragments with which it was thickly strewn : yet this has been a highway from the days of Abraham, and we read of the constant use of chariots along these roads. Now, the way lay over

a smooth and slippery rocky surface; now, narrowed between blocks of stone, it was covered with tangled roots, or seamed by wide fissures. All the same to my bold Arab courser seemed smooth turf or rugged rock: eagerly she swept along over hill and hollow, as if it were a pastime;



POOLS OF SOLOMON

bounding from rock to rock with the ease of a gazelle and the mettle of a bloodhound. The evening was sultry warm, but no stain darkened her silken skin, not a pant escaped from her deep chest, not a spot of foam flecked the bit.

The sun was just setting in Eastern glory as we reached a vast embattled Saracenic castle, on which ruin has made but slight impression: beneath it

lie the Pools of Solomon, from which water was once conveyed to Jerusalem.¹

I returned more slowly and pensively to Bethlehem, by the light of as brilliant a moon as ever shone over this hallowed land in its proudest hour. On the fields through which I was passing, the glory of the Lord once shone around; the announcement of "Peace on earth, good will toward man," was heard through this calm air from angel-voices. In the distance, clear against the starry sky, stood "the city of David," from out whose gloomy walls arose the Light of the World.

As I rode thoughtfully along, I did not observe that my servant was missing. I had heard a shot, but such sounds are too familiar to excite attention in a country where every man goes armed. I rode back to the valley where I had seen him last, but there was no sign of him; a few minutes afterwards I met a goat-herd with a musket slung upon his shoulder, which I seized hold of, as I demanded intelligence of the dragoman. The man did not appear surprised, said he had heard a shot, and seen a man galloping off towards the mountains: at the same time he opened the pan of his fire-lock, to show *he* had not fired. I offered him a piece of gold if he would accompany me in my search, but he pointed silently to his flock, and moved on. I then rode along each path, and ascended every eminence,

¹ These are in good repair, but quite dry, and indeed it would take all the water I have yet seen in Judea to fill them. They are three in number, at three different levels, and measure respectively about 600, 500, and 300 feet in length.

shouting out Nicóla's name, which the echoing hills took up, and carried far away. There was no sign of him; the rocky pathways afforded no trace of his footsteps. I rode back to Bethlehem, and the governor not being visible, I enlisted some townspeople in my search. I then went to the bishop, to request that his mounted servants might assist me. He was in the convent chapel; and here, hurried as I was, I paused for a moment to contemplate the scene that revealed itself as I drew aside the tapestry that occupied the place of door.

The altar blazed with gold, and the light of the consecrated lamps showed richly on its embroidered velvet drapery: the superior of the convent, with a reverend grey beard falling over his dark purple robes, had his right hand raised in the attitude of declamation; while the bishop, in his black dress, would have been scarcely visible in the gloom, but for the white drapery of the lady, his daughter, who leant upon his arm, and followed with her eyes the arguments of each speaker. The sudden change from excitement and hard riding, and crowded streets, and eager voices, to that calm, solemn scene, was so imposing, that I almost forgot my haste in its contemplation; but the clank of sword and spur broke dissonantly into the conversation of the churchmen: they turned to me with anxious and kind attention, and the bishop immediately placed his groom and janissary (soldier) at my disposal.

I did not wait while the servants were arming

themselves and mounting; but, leaving directions for them to try the Jerusalem road, and directing some armed citizens, who pressed eagerly to be employed, to disperse themselves over the neighbouring hills, I rode away to the ill-favoured village, in the direction of which my servant had last been seen. This place bore an evil character in the country; it sold little but wine and spirits, and bought nothing; yet it was walled round as carefully as if it contained the most respectable and valuable community. Unwearied as in the morning, my gallant mare dashed away over the rocky valley, exulting in her strength and speed. She pressed against the powerful bit, as if its curb were but a challenge, and it was only by slackening the rein that she could be induced to pause over some precipitous descent, or tangled copse; then, tossing her proud head, she would burst away again like a greyhound from the leash. Her hoofs soon struck fire out of the flinty streets of the unpopular village; few people appeared there, and those few seemed to have just come in from the country, for every man carried a musket, and wore a knife in his sash; they answered sulkily to my inquiries, and said that no horsemen had entered their village for many a day.

Seeing now that it was useless to seek further until daylight, I pushed on towards a different gate from that by which I had entered: a steep street, whose only pavement was the living rock, led down to this; as I cantered along, I could see a group of dark figures standing under the archway,

and the two nearest of the party had crossed their spears to arrest my passage. I could not then have stopped if I would; neither the custom of the country nor the circumstances of the case required much ceremony; so, shouting to them to "stand clear," I gave spurs to my eager steed, and burst through them as if I was "switching a rasper": the thin spears gave way like twigs; the mob rebounded to the right and left, against the wall; they were all armed, and mine was not the only steel that gleamed, as a fellow rushed forward to seize my bridle. The next moment my mare chested him, and sent him spinning and tangled in his long blue gown: while I shot forth into the open moonlight, and, turning round a pile of ruins, was in a moment hidden from their view.

I now held on my way for Bethlehem, when, at a turn of the path, I came suddenly upon an armed party. They proved to be only some citizens, however, who had come out to inform me that my servant was found: they scarcely believed that I had been in and *out* of that "den of robbers," as they harshly called the village I had just been visiting. A few minutes afterwards I found my unfortunate dragoman at the convent, pale and trembling, and leaning against his foaming horse, with a crowd of men, women, and children, listening, with open mouths and eyes, to his adventures.

He had forgotten his rosary at the Pools of Solomon, and turned back to look for it; while slowly descending a steep part of the road, an Arab fired at him from behind a rock, so close that his

jacket was singed, while the bullet had torn off part of the embroidery of his collar : I believe the poor fellow's skin was slightly scratched besides, and he was so terrified that as he galloped off he mistook the road, and never drew rein until he reached Jerusalem. Here he found the gates closed, and the guards refused to admit him : he had been met at last by the bishop's servants, making the best of his way back to Bethlehem.

I had rather enjoyed my moonlight gallop, notwithstanding my anxiety for the cause of it; yet I found it a most pleasant change to join the quiet tea-party in the refectory. It was a rare and real pleasure to enjoy such society, under such circumstances; and the evening flew rapidly away until the convent's chimes announced the hour for prayer. Then, in the midst of that gloomy convent, I heard the noble liturgy of our own creed read by a father of our own Church, whose voice was echoed by the spot from whence that worship sprung.

And afterwards we walked on the convent's terraced roof, and traced by the clear moonlight the various scenes of interest that lay beneath us. In yonder valley Ruth was found gleaning by her gentle kinsman; yonder mountain is Goliah's hill : among those fields on which glory still seems to shine, the shepherds received the angel-tidings that CHRIST WAS COME : beneath us was the manger wherein He lay; around us the objects on which His infant eyes unclosed; from beyond those distant, pale, blue mountains, came the "kings of Arabia and Saba, bringing gifts"; and over the

hill-country opposite, in after-ages, came other pilgrims, in warrior guise or humble weed, ready to lay down their lives, their loves—anything but their sins—upon that hallowed spot.

It was late when we retired for the night; a lay-brother of the convent showed me the way to the cell I was to occupy, and, depositing his little crescent upon the door, left me, with a salutation, to my repose.

The next morning, after matins, I waited on the superior of the Armenian Convent to pay my respects and to thank him for his hospitality. He was a fine-looking old man, with a very gracious, though somewhat patronising air. "We are always most happy," he said, "to receive any friend of the Bishop of the English, and in future shall be happy to receive you on your own account." I offered the lay-brother the gratuity usually expected at a convent; this he courteously declined, even when put in the light of a charity for him to distribute among the poor. Finally, I took leave of our bishop, with feelings of gratitude and respect for him, and an increased interest in his mission.

Before proceeding to the Dead Sea, I was obliged to return to Jerusalem for my baggage-horses and a Bedouin escort: I found Abdallah, their Sheikh (ruler), waiting for me, but he had left his horse and his arms without the walls. Issuing by the Ziön gate from the city, we rode down into the valley of Hinnom, where, under a cave that seemed to suit the character of the group, we found six wild-looking Bedouin awaiting us with Sheikh

Abdallah's horse. Their dress consisted of a light turban, a coarse white frock with cross-belts of



BEDOUIN SHEIKH

thick cord and a pair of slippers. The Sheikh's was nearly the same; but he had a cloak of camel's-hair cloth, striped brown and white: the footmen

had each a long musket and a knife in his belt. The Sheikh carried his musket slung at his back, a long spear in his hand, and a scimitar by his side. The Arabs assisted their chief to mount with considerable ceremony, and then professed themselves, according to Eastern custom, my most obedient slaves.

We mustered ten persons in all, including the seven Bedouin, two servants, and myself : I rode forward alone, and a lonelier scene never echoed to a traveller's tread ; when a turn in the road hid my own cavalcade from view, there was no longer a sign of life in all the dreary valley : the path lay through defiles of steep and lofty hills, pierced everywhere with caves and fissures that harboured only the jackal and the robber. The scenery became grander, gloomier, and sterner, as we approached Mar Saba ; the dry bed of the brook Kedron ran winding through the most extraordinary fissure, which clove, not a rock, but a mountain, some ten or twelve miles in length : its lofty and precipitous sides presented curiously contorted strata in their jagged and vertical cliffs ; and were pierced with innumerable caverns, wherein the eremites (hermits) of old lived under Hilarion's rule. The Carismians slaughtered, it is said, 10,000 of those solitaries, whose bones were afterwards piously collected and buried beneath the convent church of Mar Saba.

At length, after four hours' riding, along dry, brown, and barren cliffs, on which no insect moved or herbage grew, I came in sight of the magnificent

and romantic monastery that has stood in these savage solitudes for 1300 years. It covers the side of an almost precipitous ravine, occupying the whole face of the cliff from base to summit; battlemented walls enclose it on every side, and a deep, dark, narrow glen yawns beneath it.

Beneath lies the bed of the brook Kedron, which turns away to the left, and runs into the Dead Sea through the mountains of Engedi.

The Bedouin unceremoniously led their horses in through a small postern-gate off the road, which ran level with the highest part of the monastery, and my servants and I descended by a winding path to the chief gate. There were several monks scattered over the cliffs, gazing on the setting sun, whose last beams lighted up even those fearful chasms with something of a cheerful smile. I was admitted, and somewhat coldly received by a venerable-looking friar, who told me afterwards he had taken me for a Turk. As soon as it transpired that an Englishman had arrived, several monks came forward, and escorted me with hospitable welcomes through vaulted passages, terraces, and innumerable steps, to a very pretty little garden lying in a nook of rocks. Off this was the "strangers' room," a spacious and handsome apartment, luxuriously carpeted, and surrounded with a soft divan. An Albanian took away my boots, and an Athenian hung up my arms: two Ionians approached hastily with trays of sweetmeats and cool water; and a fine old Russian Padre (father) lighted my pipe, and then offered a powerful

cordial in a liqueur glass. Nothing could exceed the hospitality in which they seemed to vie with one another : as yet, they ministered in silence, my languages being unknown to them ; but, at length, an intelligent monk was produced in triumph who could speak Italian. The convent belonging to the Greek church, the monks understood for the most part nothing but Romaic and Russian ; an inhabitant of Joannian, who had served under Ali Pasha, was the only man out of forty, with the exception of the Superior, who could speak any but his native tongue.

When I was considered sufficiently rested, the Superior came to visit me, and, after a long conversation, deputed my Epirote friend to show me over the convent, as I proposed starting before daylight. This was founded by St. Sabas in the sixth century, and has maintained its ground, they say, ever since. It is true the monks were occasionally massacred by the Saracens, Turks, and Carismians ; but their martyrdom only gave fresh interest to the spot in the eyes of their successors. The monastery has been lately repaired by the Greek convent at Jerusalem, to which it is a sort of chapel-of-ease : it contains a beautiful church dimly lighted by two silver lamps, kept ever burning before pictures of the Saviour and the Virgin : round the head of each figure is a glory-circle of gold and precious stones, on which the lamp's light falling produces a very peculiar effect. As we left the church, a bright moonlight was shining on the cliffs, and long flights of steps, and

terraces, and gardens, so strangely intermingled in this convent; here and there, dark-robed figures were gliding silently about, or sitting on the cliffs, enjoying the cool night-breeze.

About nine o'clock, an old monk, with a large bunch of keys in his cord girdle, brought in a lamp and some supper, consisting of brown bread, eggs fried in oil, boiled rice, and very sour wine. My Albanian friend stood near me all the time of the repast, and said it was a pleasure to have a stranger to speak to. He had come recently from Mount Athos, the Monte Santo (Holy Mount), as he called it, where he had passed twenty years of his life in a Greek convent. He said there were not less than 40,000 monks and eremites on that mountain. After supper, I went out to stroll among the cliffs; and the scenery was certainly the wildest and strangest I had ever seen. The night was very beautiful; and it was past midnight when I flung myself on the soft divans that so unexpectedly wooed repose in this stern-looking convent

II

The next morning I was in the saddle before dawn, and wandering among the dreary but picturesque mountains of Engedi towards the Dead Sea; not a living thing met my eye for hours, except a few gazelles, and my own party winding slowly along the path, whilst I wandered on through many a wild pass and gloomy volcanic gorge; wander where I might, however, I was ever kept in

sight by the watchful Sheikh; his dark figure and thin grey horse seemed ever before me—he appeared to stand on every hill.

In about three hours we reached the mountain-brow looking down upon the Valley of the Jordan; and delightfully that beautiful strange scenery burst upon our weary and dazzled eyes. Far from looking gloomy or curse-stricken, it was the most smiling scene I had yet beheld in Palestine. The dread Lake itself was as brightly blue as those of Italy; the mountains of Moab and Ammon lifted their lofty line against the early sun, and wore a purple hue over their multiplied cliffs and promontories. Here and there, in the valley, were pale strips of desert, it is true; but elsewhere the ground was covered with verdure or luxuriant shrubs: the winding groves of tamarisk and acacia showed where Jordan stole along, occasionally betraying his presence by a silvery gleam.

We rode down a steep and rugged path into the plain, and continued for some miles through thick jungle, alternating with deep sand, or luxuriant grass. At length we reached the shore of the fatal Sea, and encamped within a few yards of the water's edge. The Sheikh made opposition to the pitching of the tent, lest it should be seen by the hostile tribes; but, finding his objections unavailing, he rode restlessly from hill to hill while I remained there.

The shore was strewn with logs of wood and withered branches, that presented something of a petrified appearance, but lighted into a fire with great facility. There was no shell, or fly, or any

sign of life along the curving strand, which ran steeply to the water's edge, and consisted of very small and angular pebbles. It was bordered by a line of white, thick, creamy foam, though there was scarcely a ripple on the lake; and several streaks of a similar appearance lay upon the green and purple waters far away. The eastern shore, on the left-hand side, was bold and precipitous, and wore a dark blue colour, under the slanting rays of the morning sunshine: to the west, the Judean hills rose almost equally abruptly from the sea, and appeared of a brown or purple shade: to the south, the far shore was invisible, owing not so much to distance, as to an imperceptible mist brooding over the sea.

The Lake Asphaltites is about fifty miles in length, and ten or twelve in breadth: it lies utterly unexplored, in the heart of the most interesting scenes in the world; and, if nothing but tradition bespoke its origin, every appearance round would vindicate its truth. It is said that, as in Lough Neagh—

“ By this sea's dark shore, as the wanderer strays,
 When the soft, bright eve 's declining,
 He sees the round towers of other days
 In the wave beneath him shining ”;

and, on the only island in this sea, the remains of columns and other ruins are said to have been detected by the telescope.

My servant and I endeavoured to swim to this island: we found the effort very fatiguing, as the extreme buoyancy threw the feet into the air at

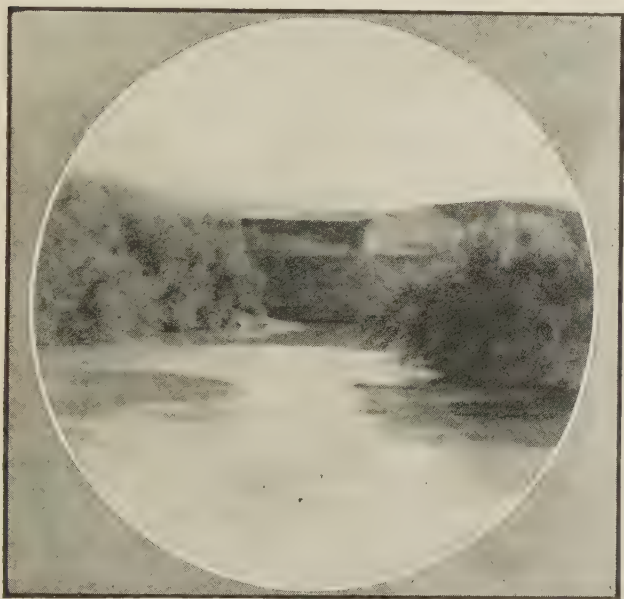
every stroke : the temperature was delightful, and floating required no exertion ; we could sit, stand, or even wade, in deep water, without trouble. Nevertheless, the water was so acrid, that when a drop touched the inside lip, or eye, or nostril, it seemed to burn like vitriol. We swam for about half a mile, but a slight breeze coming on raised rippling waves that produced excruciating pain : we struggled on, however, for a short time ; till the breeze freshening obliged us to return to the shore.

The Arabs now urged a hasty departure, and we had not proceeded far when the Sheikh halted and placed his hand so as to shade his eyes ; the loitering Bedouin stepped forward and formed in a line before the luggage, keeping the step, and holding their muskets crossed upon their breasts. I rode up to the Sheikh, and he pointed out to me the crimson and yellow kefi¹ of two Arabs, just over a small sand-hill ; he then dashed forwards, and in a few moments we were by the side of the strangers. They proved to belong to a friendly tribe, and were only engaged in collecting brimstone ; alarmed at our appearance, they were endeavouring to conceal themselves, when detected by the keen bright eye of our Sheikh.

Directing our course for the winding line of tamarisk and tall jungle, we came at length suddenly upon the Jordan, a rapid, muddy, treacherous-looking stream. The pilgrims profess here to

¹ A thick silk handkerchief, tied over the head like a hood, with a weft of camel's hair, the distinguishing head-dress of the Bedawee (*Bedouin* is the plural of *Bedawee*).

recognise the spot by which the Israelites entered the Land of Promise, and that where John baptized; but I saw no appearance of a ford: it was about sixty yards wide, overhung by thick shrubs and tangling weeds, and anything but attractive. I



FORD ON THE JORDAN

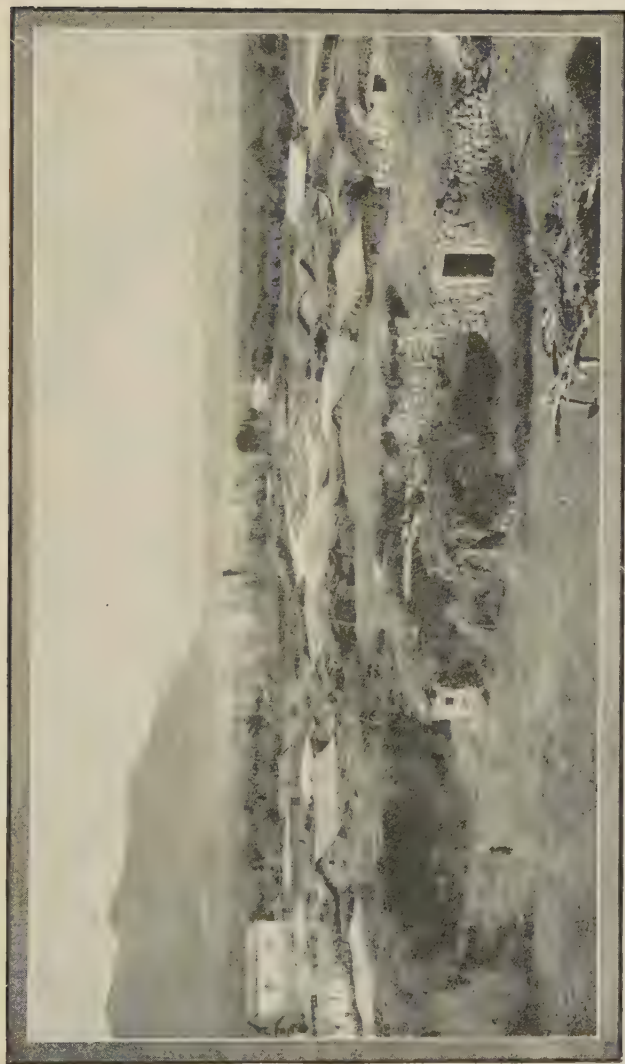
sank up to my knees in its tenacious mud, and with great difficulty extricated myself, endeavouring vainly to stem the rapid torrent by swimming.

The Sheikh was now urgent to depart; and we rode away through a small tract of desert, covered with a salty incrustation like hoar-frost, and then entered a wilderness of beautiful shrubs in fruit

and flower. The tamarisk, laurustinus, mimosa, and willow, were the only trees I recognised. The underwood was very various, and quite unknown to me : one of the shrubs bore a small golden fruit about the size of a walnut, that hung temptingly on its bending branches ; within, it was full of a black dust and a substance resembling cobweb. The Arabs called it “ Bahr Lût limone ”—*Lot's sea-orange* ; but this is not the true apple of Sodom, which I have seen elsewhere in the desert : that is much larger, very fragile, and is full of cindrous-looking grains and a silken fibre.

In the midst of this beautiful wilderness, flowering shrubs in wild luxuriance tangled themselves into a shade for the soft green grass, and waved over the bright fountain of Ain Hajla, which well deserves its name—“ The Diamond of the Desert.” The costliest wine that ever sparkled over the thrilled palate of the epicure never gave such pleasure as the first draught of that cold, shining water to our parched mouths. Even the escort forgot their fear of the hostile tribes ; and we all—Frank and Arab—flung ourselves down by the brink of the fountain, under the shade of the green willows, and drank, and bathed our hands and beards, and drank again until the Sheikh's entreaties prevailed, and set us once more in motion.

There is a fine ruin of a Greek convent, about two miles distant from the pathway ; I cantered over to examine it, and, as I emerged from its deserted courts, found the Sheikh, as usual, by my side. On asking the occasion of this strict watch-



JERICHO

fulness, he replied that he was responsible for my safety; that the old ruin was haunted by banditti, and, what was worse, by evil spirits !

About an hour afterwards we came in sight of a Saracenic castle partly in ruins, though a tent upon the roof showed it was still inhabited; it was seated on a gentle eminence, in a grove of fig-trees and acacias : close by was a village of Arab huts—this was Jericho !

My tent was pitched on a spot of green turf, close to a purling brook that flowed from Elisha's Well. On my left was the old castle, called by pilgrims (who love to turn everything to good account) the House of Zaccheus; to the right, under a thick grove, our horses were picketed, and the Bedouin were lying on the ground among them. The village of Riha (the name of Jericho is here unknown) lay behind—a collection of miserable mud-cabins; and one solitary date-tree alone remained to vindicate the epithet applied in scripture to the "City of the Palm."¹

The valley I had just traversed from the Jordan was the vale of Gilgal; to the southward lay the Dead Sea; to the north-east, the Mountain of the Temptation. The first is evidently fertile to exuberance : and, in the absence of more profitable employment, it gives birth to every variety of produce that is contented to grow wild. Were this vast valley inhabited by an industrious people,

¹ The Palm formerly abounded in Palestine ; it is now very scarce. In Vespasian coins, Judea is beautifully typified by a disconsolate and lonely woman seated under a palm.

and the facilities for irrigation made use of, it might be one of the most productive in the world. The Sea of Galilee, about thirty miles distant, is elevated considerably above its level, and yet the vivifying waters of the Jordan are at present wasted on the thankless corpse of the Dead Sea.

This sea has no appearance of volcanic origin. It merely occupies part of the great valley, or *crevasse*, that runs from the Lebanon almost to the Gulf of Akabah. This absence of volcanic agency renders still more remarkable the appearances of some fierce, fiery ordeal, through which it must have passed.

We picked up several pieces of sulphur on the plain: there is a quantity of a dark stone, which, when broken, emits a smell of brimstone: the very core of the apples of Sodom is of so combustible a quality, that the Arabs use it as tinder for their matchlocks; and the Sea itself is a vast cauldron, in which the Cities of the Plain lie ever seething in salt brine, to whose simmering surface masses of bitumen ever and anon rise bubbling.

The range of the Hills of Moab, rising up suddenly from the eastern edge of the Dead Sea, is about two thousand feet in height; that of the Judean side opposite, about fifteen hundred. The Sea itself lies five hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; it has no exit, except by means of evaporation, and varies in its level some ten or twelve feet, according to the nearness or remoteness of the rainy season.

Messrs. Moore and Beke, who attempted to

explore the Dead Sea, in 1837, found no bottom with 300 fathom of line, but their investigations were unfortunately soon interrupted; and Mr. Costigan, the only other person who succeeded in launching a boat upon these waters, has left no trace of his discoveries.

One or two spots on its shore are inhabited, such as Ain Jiddy, or Engedi, where fresh water flows from fountains; but, generally speaking, it is all as lonely as the grave. The remains of the town of Zoar are still visible on the Eastern hills, amongst which the race of Moab sprang from the daughters of Lot. It seems that there are whole tracts of hills composed of fossil salt to the south-east of this extraordinary lake; and they say, that when the riven soil gaped into fissures with the heat of the conflagration, a mass of this salt was revealed to Lot, who took it for his missing wife !

* * * * *

Towards evening, I strolled into the courtyard of the old castle, where a Turkish garrison is quartered to protect the pilgrims, and check the inroads of the Bedouin from beyond the Jordan.

There was a marble fountain and reservoir of water here, at which the village girls were filling their jars. A range of stables occupied one side of the courtyard, and a shade of trellised vines hung over another. Beneath this the Aga was sitting on his carpet with two or three of his officers; whilst others moved about in their wild, martial garb, with pistol in belt, and sword by

side, as if momentarily expecting the trumpet's call. Such a scene unchanged might that old Crusader-castle have witnessed, six hundred years ago, when the Crescent had just displaced the Cross; and its fierce soldiery then, as now, were lounging about, or burnishing their arms beneath the shade of the forbidden vine.

I did not visit the Aga, being rather tired of governors, and pipes and coffee, and commonplaces about England and fine brandy; I presume he was equally tired of Europeans, for he did not invade my solitude, or vouchsafe me any notice.

At night the aspect of my bivouac was very picturesque; the watch-fire, blazing among the dark, green shrubs, gleamed now upon the water, now upon the gay caparisons of the horses that remained standing and saddled all night. The Arabs slept round my tent, wrapped in their striped bernouses; nightingales were thrilling the dark groves with their song; and from the top of the tower came sounds of music and laughter, as the ladies of the Aga's hareem were enjoying the moonshine and the cool air of the night.

About three in the morning, I roused my sleeping people, who sprung to their feet with alacrity. In a few minutes, a little fire was made with dried leaves and twigs, ignited by tinder and a pistol-flash: then the coffee steamed and bubbled; and this, with a roll of bread, constituted our morning's repast. We seldom tasted any other food till sunset; but a cup of coffee always presented itself when we halted for half an hour throughout the day.

The good-humoured Bedouin vied with each other in loading the horses, and gratefully received a thimbleful of coffee as reward. We were in motion while the moon still threw our shadows eastward.

I passed through some glades and groves of great beauty on my way to the adjoining mountains, but could detect no traces of where Jericho once stood, with her temples, palaces, and theatres. A curious mound, and a large tank-like excavation, were the only disturbance of Nature's order of things that I observed.

At the approach of morning, the stir of life that seemed, like leaven, to ferment the surface of the world round, was very striking; first, the partridge's call joined chorus with the nightingale, and soon after their dusky forms were seen darting through the bushes, and then bird after bird joined the chorus; the lizards began to glance upon the rocks, the insects on the ground and in the air; the jerboa¹ peeping from its burrow, fish glancing in the stream, hares bounding over the dewy grass, and—as more light came—the airy form of the gazelle could be seen on almost every neighbouring hill. Then came sunrise, first flushing the light clouds above, then flashing over the Arabian mountains, and pouring down into the rich valley of the Jordan; the Dead Sea itself seemed to come to life under that blessed spell, and shone like molten gold among its purple hills.

¹ A pretty little animal, something between a rat and a rabbit in appearance and habits.

I lingered long upon that mountain's brow, and thought that, so far from deserving all the dismal epithets that have been bestowed upon it, I had not seen so cheerful or attractive a scene in Palestine. That luxuriant valley was beautiful as one great pleasure-ground—its groves of aromatic shrubs, intermingled with sloping glades and verdant valleys : the City of Palms might still be hidden under that forest whence the old castle just shows its battlements : the plains of Gilgal might still be full of prosperous people, with cottages concealed under that abundant shade ; and the dread sea itself shines and sparkles as if its waters rolled in pure and refreshing waves “ o'er coral rocks and amber beds ” alone.

The road from hence to Jerusalem is drear and barren, and nothing but Bethany occurred to divert my thoughts from dwelling on the beautiful Dead Sea.

CHAPTER V

THE ARAB AND HIS HORSE

And he will be a wild man ; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him : and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.—Gen. xvi. 12.

THE Arab is the hero of romantic history ; little is known of him but by glimpses ; he sets statistics at defiance, and the political economist has no share in him ; for who can tell where the Arab dwelleth, or who has marked out the boundaries of his people !

Since Abraham drove forth Hagar to the desert, his descendants have clung to their barren inheritance with a fierce fidelity. While the Israelite has tasted the luxury and the bitterness of all nations—triumphing and trampled on in turn—the Ishmaelite has gone down to his desert grave, generation after generation, unchanging and unsubdued.

The Bedawee roams as freely over his boundless deserts as the winds that sweep them ; the only barriers he knows are civilisation and its settled habitations. Tribes sunder and join as pastures become scarce or abundant ; an oasis is to-day peopled with thousands, and covered with flocks and herds ; to-morrow it is lonely as the sea.

And thus it has been with the Arab for three thousand years.

The real Bedawee has little of historical interest; it is only when he has gone forth as a conqueror, that his annals assume a consistent or interesting form. His whole history when at home may be comprised in the fact, that he is to-day, as he was in the days of Ishmael, unconquered and indomitable. Those of his race who approach the settled habitations endeavour to preserve as much as possible the character of their desert brethren; and though search for the means of subsistence may compel them occasionally to enter a town, they always do so with reluctance, and leave it like men escaping from captivity.

Their reverence for hospitality is one of the wild virtues that have survived from the days of the patriarchs. The Arab will rob you, if he is able; he will even murder you, if it suits his purpose; but, once under the shelter of his tribe's black tents, or having eaten of his salt by the wayside, you have as much safety in his company as his heart's blood can purchase for you.

The Bedouin are extortionate to strangers, dishonest to each other, and reckless of human life. On the other hand, they are faithful to their trust, brave after their fashion, temperate, and patient of hardship and privation beyond belief. Their sense of right and wrong is not founded on the Decalogue, as may be well imagined; yet from such principles as they profess they rarely swerve. Though they will freely risk their lives to steal,

they will never contravene the wild rule of the desert. If a wayfarer's camel sinks and dies beneath its burden, the owner draws a circle round the animal in the sand, and follows the caravan. No Arab will presume to touch that lading, however tempting. Dr. Robinson mentions that he saw a tent hanging from a tree near Mount Sinai, which his Arabs said had been there a twelvemonth, and never would be touched until its owner returned in search of it.

The Bedawee women are under much less restraint than the Egyptian, and, like women everywhere else, are far more true to trust than to control; they do not cover their faces, and are not afraid to receive a stranger with courtesy and kindness. They live much in the open air, manufacturing cloth and camel's hair, milking their flocks, attending to the slight agriculture that their mode of life requires, and carefully tending their children. Their husbands seek a livelihood by attending or supplying caravans with camels, or by other less conventional dealings with travellers.

There is something very romantic in the Arab mode of life, which never seems to lose its zest; their love of the desert amounts to a passion, and every one who has wandered with these wild sons of freedom where all else are slaves, can understand the feeling. It is not to be imagined that in this desert there is only barren sand and naked rock; far different is the aspect that their picturesque encampments present. Small flowering shrubs and fragrant thickets diversify wide savannahs,

on which dry, sunburnt grass only serves as shelter for soft and tender herbage : there the wild boar and the gazelle abound, and the partridge makes merry in his security. Wide tracts of desert intervene, it is true, between these isles of verdure ; and, when they are to be crossed, preparations like those for the sailing of a fleet, are made for these “ ships of the desert.” Fearlessly they steer their way over these trackless wilds, by the stars at night and by the sun by day : and when they have reached the spot to which they have traversed the desert, in the faith, perhaps, of some tradition that spoke of verdure there, the Sheikh strikes his ostrich-tufted spear in the ground. Down kneel the camels ; women, children, and luggage tumble off ; soon the tents of the tribe start up in a circle, or in the form of a crescent round the Sheikh’s ; fires are lighted, bread is baking, and the Arab is as much at home in an hour as if he had been there for a generation.

For a few days or weeks—it may be even for a season—they remain in such encampment, driving their flocks each night into the enclosure, and perhaps foraging among the neighbouring tribes ; sometimes a caravan is to be attacked ; and then the men assemble in many thousands. When the pasture or the spring is exhausted, or when danger threatens, they are in motion at a moment’s notice from their Sheikh ; his spear is the last thing taken from the ground ; the horsemen and armed warriors, on dromedaries, march in front ; then come the flocks and herds ; the she-camels, carrying the

women and children, succeed in order, while their young gambol and browse by their sides as they proceed : finally, come the strong camels, laden with the tents and other baggage of the tribe.

Literature they have none, but they nourish their romantic imaginations by oral tales, and poems, running down from very ancient times. The desert is full of superstitions, many of which are very poetical ; and these help to keep alive the Moslem faith wherewith they are ingeniously blended.

At daybreak, the Sheikh shouts the call to prayer from the door of his tent ; and it is a striking and solemn sight to witness that devout congregation—every man kneeling at the door of his tent, and prostrating himself in the dust with his face towards Mecca.

The wealth of the Arab consists in flocks and herds ; but his pride and power lie in his horse.

These are noble animals, and are no less remarkable for their chivalrous disposition than for their strength and endurance : gallant, yet docile ; fiery, yet gentle ; full of mettle, yet patient as a camel : they are very ferocious to each other, but suffer little children to pull about and play with them. Their beauty is not remarkable—at least, to an English eye. They seldom exceed fourteen and a half, or at most fifteen, hands in height ; they have not good barrels ; their chest is narrow, the pastern too much bent, and their quarters are seldom well turned. The head is beautiful : the expansive forehead, the brilliant, prominent eye,

and the delicately-shaped ear, would testify to nobleness in any animal; the high withers, and the shoulder well thrown back; the fine, clean limbs, with their bunches of starting muscle; and the silken skin, beneath which all the veins are visible, show proofs of blood that never can deceive.

The choicest horses come from the remoter parts of the desert, and cannot be said to have a price, as nothing but the direst necessity will induce their owners to part with them. A friend of mine rode his horse from Cairo to Suez, eighty-five miles, in twelve hours, and, resting for twelve more, returned within the following twelve; during these journeys, the horse had no refreshment, except a gulp of water once to cool the bit. I have been on the same horse for twenty-four hours on one occasion, and for upwards of thirty on another, without any rest or refreshment, except once, for half an hour, when a few handfuls of barley were the only food. In both these instances, the horses never tasted water throughout their journeys.

Some of my young naval friends used to ride the same horses at a gallop almost the whole distance to Djoun and back, about sixty miles, over roads that would appear impossible to an English horse to climb. I only mention these instances as of daily occurrence. The horse of the true Nedjed breed will gallop, they say, one hundred and twenty miles without drawing a thick breath.

Nedjed is a mountainous country in the Hedjaz, not far from Mecca, which possesses the horse in the most perfect form known. The pedigrees of

these animals are sometimes worn round their necks, but on such I should be inclined to look with suspicion; for in the remote regions of the desert, where alone the pure blood is to be found, writing is unknown. Oral pedigrees, well borne out by the hieroglyphics of noble blood that may be read in the outward structure, so eloquent of the power within—these are the pedigrees most to be relied on. The mare is far more valued than the horse, as the Bedouin believe that the mother gives character to the race, and deduce the descent of the horse through the female line. The mare is also supposed to be capable of enduring greater fatigue, and to require less sustenance.

CHAPTER VI

DAMASCUS

DAY dawned upon our rocky couch on the Hill of Hermon in a couple of hours. We had been sleeping under our horses, and they had never stirred a limb for fear of hurting us.¹ Our horses had had no water for twenty-four hours, and we no refreshment of any kind for twenty. Finding there was still a gallop in my steed's elastic limbs, I pushed on for Damascus, leaving my people to follow more slowly. After a couple of hours' hard riding, I came to another range of mountains, from beyond which opened the view of Damascus, that the Prophet abstained from, as too delightful for this probationary world.

It is said that after many days of toilsome travel, beholding the city thus lying at his feet, he exclaimed, "Only one Paradise is allowed to man; I will not take mine in this world"; and so he turned away his horse's head from El Sham, and pitched his tent in the Desert.

I reined up my steed with difficulty on the side of the mountain; he had already, perhaps, heard the murmur of the distant waters, or instinct told him that Nature's life-streams flowed beneath that

¹ The "dew of Hermon" fell so heavily during the night, that it ran off our capotes (cloaks) in rivulets, when we shook them.

bright green foliage. For miles around us lay the dead desert, whose sands appeared to quiver under the shower of sunbeams : far away to the south and east it spread like a boundless ocean : but there, beneath our feet, lay such an island of verdure as nowhere else perhaps exists. Mass upon mass of dark, delicious foliage rolled like waves among garden tracts of brilliant emerald green. Here and there, the clustering blossoms of the orange or the nectarine lay like foam upon that verdant sea. Minarets, white as ivory, shot up their fairy towers among the groves, and purple mosque-domes, tipped with the golden crescent; these gave the only sign that a city lay bowered beneath those rich plantations.

An hour's gallop brought me to the suburban gates of Mezzé, and thenceforth I rode on through streets, or rather lanes, of pleasant shadow. For many an hour we had seen no water : now it gushed, and gleamed, and sparkled all around us; from aqueduct above, and rivulet below, and marble fountain in the walls—everywhere it poured forth its rich abundance; and my horse and I soon quenched our burning thirst in the streams of Abana and Pharphar.

On we went, among gardens, and fountains, and odours, and cool shade, absorbed in sensations of delight, like the knights of old who had just passed from some ordeal to its reward. Fruits of every delicate shape and hue bended the boughs hospitably over our heads; flowers hung in canopy upon the trees, and lay in variegated carpet on the ground;



DAMASCUS

the lanes through which we went were long arcades of arching boughs; the walls were composed of large square blocks of dried mud, which in that bright, dazzling light somewhat resembled Cyclopean architecture, and gave I know not what of simplicity and primitiveness to the scene. At length I entered the city, and thenceforth lost the sun while I remained there. The luxurious people of Damascus exclude all sunshine from their bazaars by awnings of thick mat, wherever vine-trellises or vaulted roofs do not render this precaution unnecessary.

The effect of this pleasant gloom, the cool currents of air created by the narrow streets, the vividness of the bazaars, the variety and beauty of the Oriental dress, the fragrant smell of the spice-shops, the tinkle of the brass cups of the seller of sherbets—all this affords a pleasant but bewildering change from the silent desert and the glare of sunshine. And then the glimpses of places strange to your eye, yet familiar to your imagination, that you catch as you pass along. Here is the portal of a large khan, with a fountain and cistern in the midst. Camels and bales of merchandise and turbaned negroes are scattered over its wide quadrangle, and an arcade of shops or offices surrounds it, above and below, like the streets of Chester. Another portal opens into a public bath, with its fountains, its reservoirs, its gay carpets, and its luxurious inmates, clothed in white linen, and reclining upon cushions as they smoke their chibouques.

In the luxury of a Turkish bath I soon forgot the fatigue of a thirty hours' journey, and even my horse (he, however, had been resting while I was climbing Mount Hermon) soon recovered his spirits and condition. After breakfast, the first food or drink I had tasted for twenty-four hours, I went to visit Mr. Wood, the British Consul. His hospitable house is one of the handsomest in Syria, though you enter it from a dull street, through a low and unpretending portal. A group of janissaries (Turkish soldiers), and other servants were lounging about the small outer court, whence I passed into a garden, round three sides of which the apartments ranged. A little lake of crystal water lay enclosed by marble banks; and overshadowed by beautiful weeping willows; little fountains leaped and sparkled in all directions, "and shook their loosened silver in the sun." Arcades of orange, and lemon, and mimosa-trees afforded a quivering shade to the marble mosaic paths and the parterres of flowers.

At one end of this court, or garden, was a lofty alcove, with a ceiling richly carved in gold and crimson fretwork; the walls are ornamented with arabesques, and a wire divan runs round the three sides of the apartment, which opens on the garden and its fountains. Next to this alcove is a beautiful drawing-room, with marble floor and arabesque roof, and carved niches, and softened light falling on delicately-painted walls; in the midst is an alabaster basin, into which water falls from four fantastic little fountains.

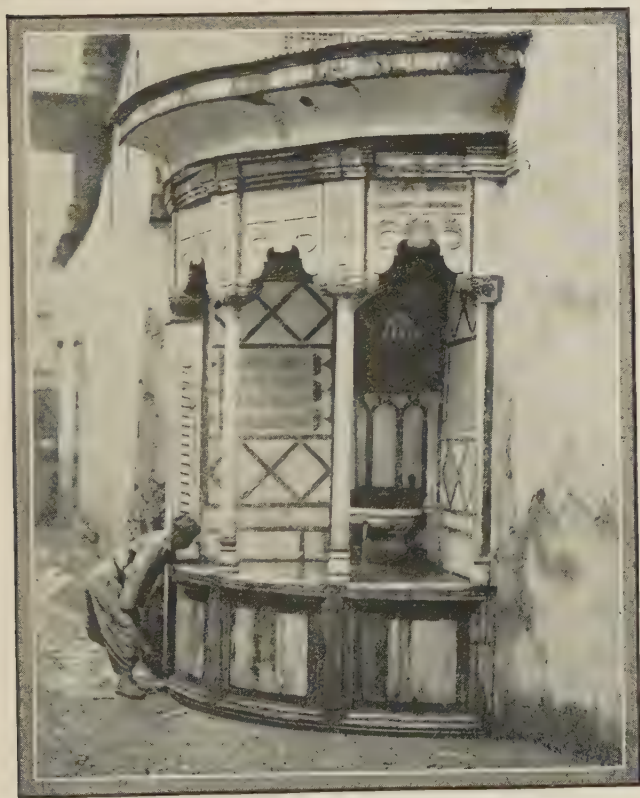
Mr. Wood appears to have extensive influence among the Arabs, and much consideration among the Turks. He has travelled very widely in the East, and understands its various people well. I would gladly enliven these pages with some of his most interesting anecdotes and information, but for the character of confidence that every private conversation possesses, or should possess.

After one night's trial of the hotel, the traveller will be glad to remove to the Franciscan convent, which, though squalid enough, is comparatively free from vermin. The terrace, too, upon this convent, commands the best view perhaps of the city, and, on a moonlight night, is the most pleasant place imaginable to smoke "the pipe of repose." The fathers, moreover, are jovial fellows, and possess a capital cellar of the wine for which the Lebanon is famous.

I thought Damascus was a great improvement upon Cairo, in every respect. It is much more thoroughly Oriental in its appearance, in its mysteries, in the look and character of its inhabitants. The spirit of the Arabian Nights is still quite alive in these, its native streets; and not only do you hear their fantastic tales repeated to rapt audiences in the coffee-houses, but you see them hourly exemplified in living scenes.

Damascus is all of a bubble with nargilehs and fountains; the former are in every mouth, and the latter gush from every corner of the street. These fountains are in themselves very characteristic, beautifully carved with fanciful

designs, that seem ever striving to evade the Moslem's law against imitating anything in creation.



A STREET FOUNTAIN IN DAMASCUS

The heat of the climate is turned into a source of pleasure, by the cool currents of air that are ingeniously cultivated, and the profusion of ices, creams, and juicy fruits that everywhere present

themselves. Many of the shopkeepers have large feather fans, which are in constant flutter; and even the jewellers, as they work in public, turn aside from the little crucibles, in which ingots of gold or silver are learning ductility and obedience to art, to fan their pallid cheeks and agitate their perfumed beards with these wide-spread fans.¹

The rides about Damascus are very striking and pleasant. You wander through a labyrinth of sycamore or walnut-shaded lanes, with bright Abana and Pharphar gleaming through the foliage, or sparkling in stream or fountain. Sometimes you find a picturesque mill terminating the path that has led you wandering, and sometimes you come upon a group of Syrians smoking indolently in an arbour, or rushing about like maniacs on active horses, that seem to enjoy their wild game of the Jereed as much as their riders. There is little to be seen in Damascus, except the city's self. No vestige remains of the palaces of the Sultans; and, indeed, few of any other antiquity, though this is probably the most ancient city in the world: Eleazer, the trusty steward of Abraham, was a citizen of it nearly 4000 years ago, and the Arabs maintain that Adam was created here out of the red clay that is now fashioned by the hand of the potter into other forms.

¹ The celebrated sword-blades are no longer manufactured here. The trade was transferred to Khorassan by one of the many conquerors that have ravaged this fair city. The steel was "cut as fine as horsehair, and interwoven with gold as finely drawn as woman's tresses," then subjected to fire, till each metal became imbued with the virtues of the other, and the blade would cut gossamer as it floated in the air.

Damascus life begins very early in the morning, and the shops are almost all closed by one or two o'clock in the afternoon : thenceforth the cafés and the gardens become filled, and, after sunset, you seldom meet any one in the streets ; the few who appear there are obliged to carry lanterns, and the different quarters of the town are enclosed by guarded gates.

I made the acquaintance of an Arab physician, who was possessed of considerable wealth, and was, moreover, a person of literary attainments. I accepted an invitation to visit him one evening ; and, after traversing many silent streets, with guarded gates at either end, I arrived at one of the low and unpretending doorways I have mentioned.

I was admitted by a black slave, and ushered through a long dark passage into a courtyard, which presented a very striking appearance ; in the midst, the usual fountain leaped and sparkled in the rays that, falling from a painted lantern, converted each drop of spray into rubies or emeralds. Mimosas, hanging their flowery wreaths, and orange-trees bending with their golden fruit, stood round, themselves shadowed by some tall luxuriant palms. On one side, many lights twinkled in the lattices of the hareem ; on the other rose a wide alcove, with fretted roof, and a raised marble floor. The Divan was occupied by some gorgeously-clad Turks, some merchants, and two Armenian priests in violet robes, and high black turbans. A large painted lantern

threw its coloured light upon this picturesque and imposing group.

The circle, except the priests, rose as I entered, and remained standing until I had taken my seat; then, resuming theirs, each laid his hand upon his heart, and, bowing slowly, muttered something about Allah. A pipe was then presented, and, according to the pleasant Eastern usage, no observation was addressed to me until I had time to become familiarised with the appearances that surrounded me.

My host was a noble-looking fellow, with piercing eyes and a long black beard; yet his countenance wore an expression of mirth and good-humour, that contrasted curiously with that reverend beard and lofty look. A long robe of dark flame-coloured silk was wrapped round his waist by a voluminous shawl, and a white muslin turban was folded broadly on his forehead.

He held a conversation (through an interpreter) with great animation and interest on European topics, inquiring about steam, chemistry, and railways. When I observed that almost all our knowledge of chemistry and astronomy came originally from his country, he said that the Arab science was only like *water* when it came to us in Frangistan: "You put fire under it and turn it into *steam*. Ah, yes!" he continued, "you English know all things, and can do what you please; you know more of us than we do of ourselves."

After some conversation on medical subjects, he inquired very eagerly about magnetism, and begged

that I would show him how it is done. Vainly I disclaimed any knowledge of the art : his enthusiasm on the subject was not to be evaded, and, at last, I consented to explain the simple process.

He beckoned to a black slave, who was standing by with folded arms, to approach ; and, as the gaunt negro knelt before me, the whole circle closed round us, and looked on in breathless suspense, while I passed my hands slowly over my patient's eyes. Soon and suddenly, to my surprise and their astonishment, a shudder passed over the gigantic frame, and he sank upon the ground, huddled like a black cloak that has fallen from a peg. A low exclamation of " Wallah ! " escaped from all the bystanders, who, one by one, endeavoured to waken him, but in vain. At length, they said quietly, " He is dead," and resumed their pipes and their pleasant attitudes on the divans, as if it was all quite " regular." My host was beside himself with astonishment, and overwhelmed me with eager questions. The physician gazed in silence for some time on the apparently breathless black mass of humanity that lay heaped upon the floor ; and then, with great diffidence and many apologies, requested I would bring him back to life, as he was worth nearly a hundred pounds. I was far from certain whether, or in what manner, this was to be done, and postponed the attempt as long as possible. At length I tried, and succeeded with a vengeance !

It was like a thousand wakenings from a thousand sleeps—long-suppressed consciousness seemed

suddenly to flash upon his brain, too powerfully for its patient endurance. With a fearful howl, he started to his feet, flung wide his arms, threw back his head, and, while his eyes rolled wildly in their sockets, he burst into a terrible shrieking sort of laughter. He seized a large vase of water, and dashed it into fragments on the marble floor : he tore up the divan, and smashed the lantern into a thousand bits ; then, with his arms spread wide, he rushed about the courtyard, while the terrified Turks hid themselves, or fled in every direction. As I watched their horror-stricken countenances, hurrying to and fro in the various light of the moon and the remaining lantern, their long draperies tangling in the plants and pillars, their black pursuer stalking along as if engaged in some grim game of "blindman's buff" : together with the howl of the maniac ringing far and wide through the silent night, the shrieks of the women in the hareem above, the rapid tread of the pursued and the tramp of the pursuer among the palms and mimosas in the strange-looking courtyard, the whole seemed to me like some fearful dream, of which I watched the result in painful and constrained suspense.

At length, the slave became exhausted by the violence of his emotions, and flinging himself on the ground, sobbed as if his heart would break. Gradually he came to himself, looked puzzledly round on the scene of devastation he had wrought, and then quietly resumed his meek attitude, and stood with folded arms on his naked chest.

Peace being restored, the scattered audience emerged one by one from their hiding-places, the lantern and fresh pipes were lighted, and we all resumed our seats, except the Armenian priest, who had disappeared in the confusion. The negro was then examined, and he described his sensations as those of exquisite delight; but he was quite unconscious of all that he had done.

As I had preserved an air of quiet indifference (which I was far from feeling) through the transaction, the Orientals thought the matter was all quite right, and looked upon me with great respect. My host professed himself as much obliged as astonished by the performance, and begged of me to return the next evening to repeat the experiment. "Heaven forbid!" thought I, as I took leave of my host, as the following day I did of Damascus.

CHAPTER VII

CONSTANTINOPLE

I

AT Beyrout I embarked for Constantinople on board a Turkish steamer, with eight hundred and fifty troops strewed along the deck so thickly that they could scarcely turn. The forecabin was allotted to the ladies of the officers; the ladies' cabin was occupied by a Persian Princess : and two Persian Princes and I had the saloon to ourselves. They were very agreeable, courteous persons, and spoke with delight of their visit to England some years ago. The Opera and the " fire-carriages " were subjects on which they particularly loved to dwell, but the women of England were the supreme subjects of their admiration. " Persian ladees," said the Prince Reza Oglu, " very beautifool; Constantinopoli ladees very beautifool; Engleesh ladees much very better."

We passed Cyprus the second day—a mountainous island of great capabilities, but withering under Turkish oppression.

On the third day we made the coast of Carmania; on the fifth we cast anchor in the harbour of the Isle of Rhodes. The city of Rhodes presents very much the appearance one would be led to expect from its situation and its history :

a mingling of European with Asiatic dwellings : churches and mosques, spires and minarets, intermingled with cypress and sycamore : without the town a pleasant boulevard affords shade for the varied population to saunter under, like the Parisians ; or to sit and smoke under, like the Turks. This island well deserves a visit, and has been hitherto very imperfectly explored : the interior is said to be very beautiful, and many remains of antiquity lie strewn about there unexamined.

In the evening we weighed anchor, and passed along a fine mountainous coast (Asia Minor) on our right. Patmos, on the left, with many an island of mythologic fame, keeps alive the attention that has henceforth no time to sleep ; for every wave of this historic sea is full of memories. Scio and Mitylene now arise ; the Gulf of Smyrna opening within this last ; and morning's earliest light shows us Ida's mountain over the level plain of Troy, with the tombs of Hector and Achilles appearing like Irish raths.

Soon afterwards we entered the Dardanelles, against a current that continually runs to the southward at the rate of three or four miles an hour. There is little that is picturesque in these celebrated Straits, which vary from one to three miles in width ; the shores consist of steep and barren hills, with but few trees scattered along their sides. The same evening we entered the little Sea of Marmora, which was throwing up as heavy a swell as if it was an ocean.

The next morning—the seventh after our departure from Beyrout—revealed to us a distant

view of magnificent Stamboul (Constantinople): we were obliged to bear away to the eastward, however, to disembark our troops on the "Princes' Islands," where they were to perform quarantine. Their sufferings during the voyage must have been extreme, exposed during the daytime to a burning sun, and at night to the spray that constantly broke over the ship; yet they showed the same profound apathy in recovering their freedom as they had done during their painful voyage. I never heard a murmur escape from one of them, though some of their officers remonstrated once or twice with the captain about their unavoidable miseries. These officers were, without exception, coarse, mean, dirty, and unsoldierlike: they seemed to belong to the very lowest class of the population.

After a long delay, while the arrival of the Princes was being announced at Constantinople, we were ordered to land at Kartal, a quarantine station on the Asiatic shore. I steered the captain's gig with the royal party in it; while a larger boat took their suite, with a beautiful mare that they had brought from the banks of the Euphrates.

And now I found myself floating on the moonlit Sea of Marmora, in the shadows of the minaretted Asiatic shore, with a fair Persian princess in my charge: I could not see her face; but her voice was soft and gentle as the breeze that breathed through the folds of her long white veil. The princes sate one on each side of me, in high conical caps of black Astrakan fur; and a female slave, enveloped in black drapery, sate opposite her young mistress. We pulled for many a mile along

that placid sea, laughing and talking merrily. Prince Timour several times endeavoured to remove his sister's veil, and appealed to me as to whether the most beautiful women in England had any objection to being seen. The Khanum (princess), however, resisted the unveiling, good-humouredly but firmly.

The moon was shining brightly over the Princes' Islands; mingling her pale beams with the golden haze that still lingered where the sun had sunk behind the European hills. We floated tranquilly along under the shadows of the Asian shore, till silence gradually stole upon the sense, or was scarcely broken by the measured stroke of the sailor's oar, and the low, monotonous chant of their Ægean song. The high black caps of the Persians began to glisten with the dew, the veiled figures of the princess and her slave drooped gradually from their unusual attitude, the dolphins played about our prow, and phosphorescent light flashed along the crest of every little wave; the mysterious-looking group and everything around were in harmony with the romantic scene and hour.

At length we landed on a tongue of land under a deserted palace, and spread a carpet for the Khanum at the foot of a sycamore. I lighted a fire of dried leaves and twigs at which Prince Timour blew until his bearded cheeks seemed about to burst, and the female slave drew forth from some part of her voluminous dress a little silver saucepan, in which we boiled some tea. This was handed in a tiny porcelain cup to the Khanum, and the princes and I made merry over the fire with the rest.

At length the luggage arrived, and we were admitted into the ruined palace which was to be our quarantine prison, with as many precautions as if we had come to storm it.

Travellers ! avoid Kartal as you would the plague that it professes to be a guard against. I was shown into a large empty room, with discoloured walls, and a floor thickly covered with dirt and gravel, among which ants and fleas were swarming. The "royal family" had similar accommodations ; and we had a narrow courtyard, with high brick walls, in common. We could hear the trees rustle in the gardens outside, but never were allowed to feel their shade ; and we could hear the waves laughing along the shore, but never were allowed the luxury of bathing. Here we were detained for a dismal fortnight, half starved and half scorched ; without any resource but our pipes and resignation, both of which my companions possessed in a much greater degree of perfection than I did.

I do not believe that twelve months of captivity could have made freedom more delightful than did the twelve dreary days I had passed in that loathsome prison.

After some hours' sailing, I came in sight of the European shore, and gazed eagerly for some object that might assure me of its identity : when, lo ! slowly emerging from the bright horizon, minaret after minaret starts into view ; mosque domes and masses of dark foliage follow : with every wave we bound over, some new feature is developed, and at length CONSTANTINOPLE stands



THE BOSPHORUS AND THE SULTAN'S PALACES

revealed in all its unrivalled magnificence and beauty. The Bosphorus shines before us like a lake : its purple waves dance into the sunlight that turns their crests to gold, and reflect along their margin the mingled foliage and fortresses that shadow their deep waters. Over these rises a richly mingled mass of palaces, and gardens, and stately towers ; and dark groves, with many minarets, and cypress-trees and purple domes, and gleaming crescents. Beyond that gorgeously crowded hill the peninsula is girded round with the majestic walls and towers that so long defied the Moslem invaders.

The triangular peninsula which Constantinople occupies is bounded on the south by the Sea of Marmora, on the east by the Thracian Bosphorus, and on the north by the Golden Horn, which separates it from Pera. This unique water is only a quarter of a mile wide, and runs, bordered by arsenals, palaces, and storehouses, for seven miles into Roumelia. All the fleets of Europe might here lie at anchor among the very streets, like the gondolas at Venice. The town of Pera occupies the whole face of the northern shore, looking down upon the Golden Horn, and out upon the Bosphorus. Here all the Europeans, with their respective embassies and consulates, have their residence.

I coasted along the Asiatic shore, until I passed the Hill of Scutari, covered with a forest of cypresses that conceal the cemetery of the city, and then steered across, under Leander's Tower, for Pera. This fortress is built upon a rock, in the midst of the Bosphorus, whereon used to rest the central

links of a chain wherewith the simple people of early times could check the course of ancient navies.

So much has been said and written of Constantinople, I shall only add that it seems to me impossible to exaggerate its beauty and commanding appearance. There is something so strange in those fairy-like towers and minarets among their rich groves and gardens, contrasted with the imposing situation of the city, and the proud array of castles and fortresses that line the shore; added to the beauty of the bright blue sea in which the city stands reflected, and the clear atmosphere that gives brilliance to the whole; it is impossible to describe the effect produced by such varied and yet harmonious features.

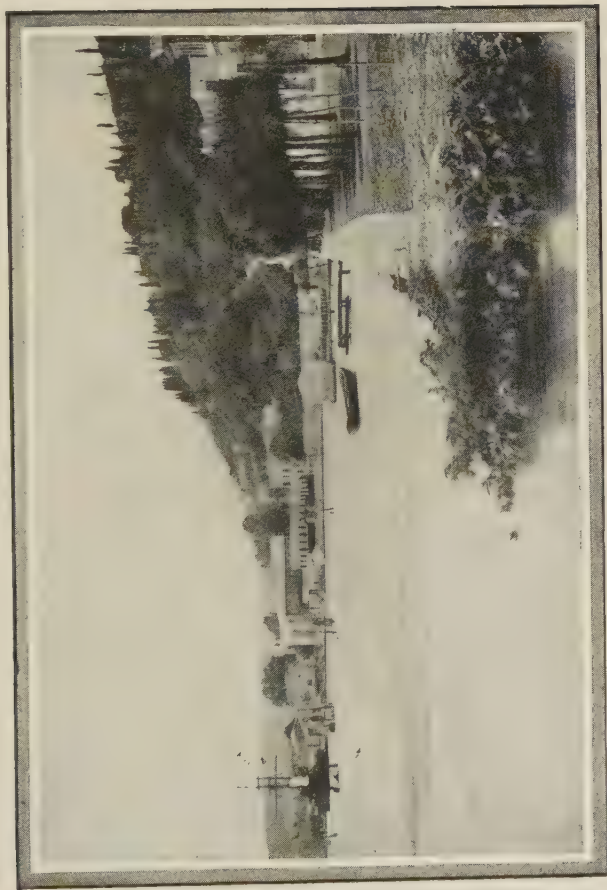
Landed at Pera, I passed a long examination before the civil authorities, and then repaired to Missirie's most comfortable hotel. It was a real pleasure to find myself once more in Europe; and the crowds of people with hats on their heads, and without moustache upon their lips, appeared quite strange to me. I can easily understand the Moslem's contempt for, and dislike to, the shaven face: once accustomed to the majestic beard and the manly moustache, the human countenance certainly assumes a very mean appearance when deprived of these natural adjuncts. The unveiled women, too, seemed very surprising, as they wandered about the streets at their own free will; and for the first day or two I felt more inclined to ask a question of the courteous Oriental, than of the smart, foppish-looking Frank.

The streets of Pera are steep and narrow, but

otherwise strictly European in their appearance. Missirie's hotel would be considered excellent anywhere, but to a man who for nearly a twelvemonth had known no shelter but such as boats, khans, or tents afforded, it was absolutely luxurious. I found several friends here, moreover ; and it was some time before I ordered horses, and set off for Buyukderé, the summer residence of our ambassador.

A gaunt black slave, mounted on a camel-like horse, preceded me with my saddle-bags, and we passed at a gallop over the wide, bleak downs that surround Pera towards the north. In some of the valleys were tracts of great richness and fertility, and some comfortable farmhouses and homesteads delightfully reminded me that I was in Europe. After an hour's hard riding we came to Sthené, and thenceforth our path lay along the beautiful shores of the Bosphorus.

This celebrated water somewhat resembles the Straits of Menai in its shape and windings, but is on an infinitely larger scale : its steep shores are mostly wooded to the water's edge, and an almost continuous village runs from Pera to Buyukderé. Occasionally this scattered array of cottages and palaces collects into a town, as at Therapia, where the greater number of the ambassadors have summer residences : sometimes it is broken by terraces shaded with trellised vines, or shady recesses among the cliffs, where the inhabitants sit sipping sherbet and smoking their chibouques. Most of the women wore the picturesque Greek dress, and there was a sufficient sprinkling of



BUYUKDERÉ

Oriental costume among the men to confer a very imposing appearance on these groups. Pleasure seemed to be the only business of their lives; every scene disclosed a garden, every building was a palace, or a fort, or a decorated cottage. On we went at a gallop along the shore, or above the hills, or thundering through the towns, except where some gaily-painted car, full of women, and drawn by two white oxen, blocked up the way.

II

The sun's last light fell upon the Black Sea as I rode into Buyukderé. Here I passed two or three most pleasant days; and it did not require the contrast of solitude, privation, and hardship, to render appreciated the gifted society and refinements of life which I there enjoyed.

Buyukderé is a very picturesque village, with green verandahs, and red-tiled roofs, and a pretty little quay, with other seaport appendages in miniature. Men-of-war, with flags of the different nations represented by the ambassadors resident here, are moored a short distance from the shore. These contribute to vary the view reaching through a vista of high cliffs and fortresses to the Black Sea; numbers of caïques (boats) are shooting constantly across the bright blue bay to Therapia; the vine-clad hills and grassy cliffs are mottled with the bright garments of the Greek inhabitants, and the whole scene is full of interest and animation.

One morning, I took a caïque to visit the Symplegades and the Black Sea: these graceful boats are the principal means of transit along the Bos-

phorus, as gondolas are at Venice; their bows are very sharp, and rise so far that only one-half of the caïque seems to rest upon the water. Their sides are formed of a single plank of very thin beech, and are quaintly adorned with gilding and oak-carving; you recline on silken cushions that supersede all seats, and, thus reposing, are shot along with incredible rapidity.

Rowed by two athletic Turks, I passed by a succession of bold cliffs and verdant valleys opening from the strait, with numerous forts close to the water's edge, and in less than an hour I was bounding over the waters of the Euxine. The light caïque leapt from wave to wave of this troubled water like a sea-gull, and it was with some difficulty we disembarked on the mass of dark and rugged cliffs that represent the Symplegades, or Cyanean rocks. This singular pile starts up from the sea to a considerable height, surmounted by an altar of pure white Parian marble. Who raised the lonely altar on this wild island none can tell; but imagination will have it to be a votive monument of some rescued mariner in the times when Argo sailed these seas.

The view from thence is very striking, commanding a wide range of the European and Asiatic shores, and of that gloomy and turbulent sea so celebrated in the songs of the sunny Archipelago. The light-houses of Europe and of Asia serve to guard as well as to enlighten the entrance to the Bosphorus, and their strong fortresses add to the effect of the bold and naked cliffs on which they stand.

We went one evening from the ambassador's

palace to visit Unkiar Skelessi, an old fortress crowning one of the Asiatic hills. The sunset was magnificent, and the Bosphorus beneath us seemed one sheet of burning gold; while far away, over hill and vale, and ruined tower, and broken aqueduct, the crimson light lent a new charm and marvel to the splendid landscape. Yet when the sun was gone, he could scarcely be regretted; evening came on with so beautiful and bright an aspect, with such diamond stars, and azure sky, and fragrant flower-smells, and softened sounds. As we glided away from that grand old castle of the Genoese, it seemed restored by the doubtful light to all its strength; the hanging woods and beetling cliffs were reflected in the star-spangled stream; the air seemed exquisitely sensitive to the faint fragrance and the distant song; and it was like the breaking of a spell when the caïque struck lightly against the marble terrace of the Palazzo.

On the 2nd of August, I left Buyukderé and my caïque shot rapidly along the bright blue stream towards Constantinople; on the eastern shore, the “Sweet Waters of Asia” with the Sultan’s palace, claimed a visit: and the beautiful village of Candalie may not be neglected, if it were only in memory of Jupiter’s adventure with Europa, and the deep allegory it contains.

Constantinople is a delightful summer residence, but the climate in winter is very disagreeable, and has none of those counteracting comforts that make us warmly welcome winter to our English hearths. The view from the burying-ground at Pera is one of the finest in the world; here all the

gay people of the Frank city assemble in the evening, and wander among the tombs with merry chat and laughter; or sit beneath the-cypress-trees, eating ice and smoking their chibouques. We looked down upon the Golden ¹ Horn, whose appellation the sunset seems to realise : its waters are



MOSQUE OF ST. SOPHIA

specked by many a caique, and reflect the white sails of a hundred ships; beyond it suddenly rises Stamboul ² itself, its richly-mingled masses of dark foliage and white palaces enveloping the peninsula, whose point terminates in the Sultan's seraglio with its gardens. The undulations of the Seven Hills may be traced through the city that

¹ This epithet was applied to it in the Greek times, and perhaps had some analogy with the crescent. In the East generally, the epithet "golden" is applied as a term of excellence; thus there is the Golden Gate at Jerusalem, etc.

² The Turkish name of Constantinople. They also say it is called from Islam-bol, "abounding in faith."

encrusts them, and occasionally you catch glimpses of the Seven Towers, the Palace of Belisarius,¹ and the brave old walls. Over all rises Mount Olympus, connecting earth's scenery with that of cloud-land.

All these, of course, we visited in detail, but they are too familiar to every reader to claim description. The Mosque of St. Sophia, with all its spoils, and the remains of such magnificence as led Justinian ¹ to exclaim, "Thank God I have been enabled to outdo Solomon!" scarce repays the trouble of procuring a special firman (passport), and the troop of guards that must accompany you. A mosque seems to me the most uninviting and prayerless-looking place of worship in the world: it is naked, altarless, tawdry, and dreary-looking. The Sultan's palace contains a bewildering number of apartments of quaint shapes and simple ornament: some are carpeted, some mirrored; there is no furniture, except cushions, and a very few tables, in any of them; but the views from the windows are superb.

The other sights of Constantinople are so similar or inferior to those of more thoroughly Oriental cities, that I shall not run the risk of repeating myself by describing them. The walls of the city, protecting the peninsula on the land-side only, are by far the most interesting remains of ancient Constantinople. They extend from the Sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn, a distance of about five miles, and connect a chain of towers through their whole extent. They are divided by a deep

¹ Justinian, Emperor of the Eastern Empire, died 565; Belisarius was his famous general.

fosse from another battlemented range of walls, which is surrounded by a moat and a sort of glacis. Mantling as they are with ivy, their war-worn fronts deeply-scarred from the crusading and the Turkish battering-engines, they still present a most imposing appearance. Ruin has only made them reverend, and left them all their lofty look. The road along their base was profoundly silent; on the left lay an extensive cemetery, where the cypress shadowed the Moslem's tomb with its sculptured turban, and the terebinth kept watch by the Armenian's grave. They say that this homeless people brought this tree with them from the shores of Lake Van, and now love to see those who are dear to them sheltered in their last sleep by its ancestral shade.

The guide affects to show the spot where the Emperor Paleologus fell as became the last of the Cæsars : it is unnecessary; for every stone of that well-defended rampart is a monument to his heroic name. His was no mere animal courage—the wild brain-fever of the moment : he saw the hour of destruction approaching from a distance; he withstood the work of dastardly treachery within, as bravely as the war of the Infidel without, the city; he had not even one glimmering of earthly hope to light him onward; but Honour was her own beacon, and showed him where and how to die. Even in his death he was identified with the people he loved so well, and days elapsed before his body was discovered, so mangled that the eagle embroidered on his dress alone told to whom it had belonged.

We entered the city by a gate through which

the Romans were wont to pass, and rode up to the palace of Belisarius in whose courtyard swarms of women and naked children were harboured; the former tried to conceal their sun-scorched faces with some dirty rag, while they held up the other hand for charity, or strove to seize our bridles. Passing from this screaming mob, whose faces were the only decently covered part of their persons, we ascended by some ruinous stone steps to the palace halls: here Desolation dwells alone—

“The spider hath woven his web in the palace,
And the owl hath sung her death-song on the towers of
Afrasiab.”

The view from these mouldering walls is the finest in Constantinople. There are nine gates or *portes* to the city, the most remarkable of which is the “Bab el Hamajoom,” looking out towards Pera: here sits the supreme council of the empire.¹ In all Oriental countries, the gate was selected as the place for administering justice, as being the most public and the easiest of access. The Turks retained many of their ancient usages among the Greek customs which, for the most part, they adopted, and this is one of the most remarkable.

We had a busy time of it at Constantinople. I found a pleasant party at Missirie’s hotel, and every hour of the day, and almost of the night, brought with it its engagement. Caïques and horses were in constant requisition, whether to skim the bright Bosphorus, or to scour the environs of Stamboul. On Friday, we hurried down to the shore, to see the Sultan going to mosque, as a royal

¹ Hence, the Turkish court or government is called the *Porte*.

salute from the seraglio (palace) announced that his caïque had left the palace; ours shot along swiftly, but the Sultan's seemed to fly; twenty-six rowers, in silken jackets, urged each gilded galley over, rather than through, the water. First came a caïque, with a canopy of blue : under this a group of officers, in blue frock-coats with diamond stars upon their breasts, sate all facing the Sultan, whose caïque followed at a short distance. He sate under a green canopy, beneath which was spread a wide cloak of dark green cloth, lined with *calico* : four officers accompanied him, with their yellow faces turned towards his, like so many sunflowers : a third galley followed, and this comprised the procession. A regiment of troops, in Turco-European costume, awaited his arrival, and a very respectable band struck up a wild air, which, I suppose, meant, "Allah, save the Sultan !"

He remained about half an hour in the mosque, then mounted a handsome horse, and passed with his suite through a dense crowd, of which we formed part. He is twenty-three years of age, and rather handsome, with a keen, dark eye, and brown moustache. He wore a plain blue frock-coat, with a red cap and purple tassel : he stared at us as he passed, but took no other notice of our salute. There seemed a considerable display of taking care of him; but evidently, the large attendance of guards, and the mystery maintained as to his movements, were measures of etiquette rather than of safety. Grand viziers (chief ministers) seem to undertake all the unpopularity of the sovereign, together with their other responsibilities : they are

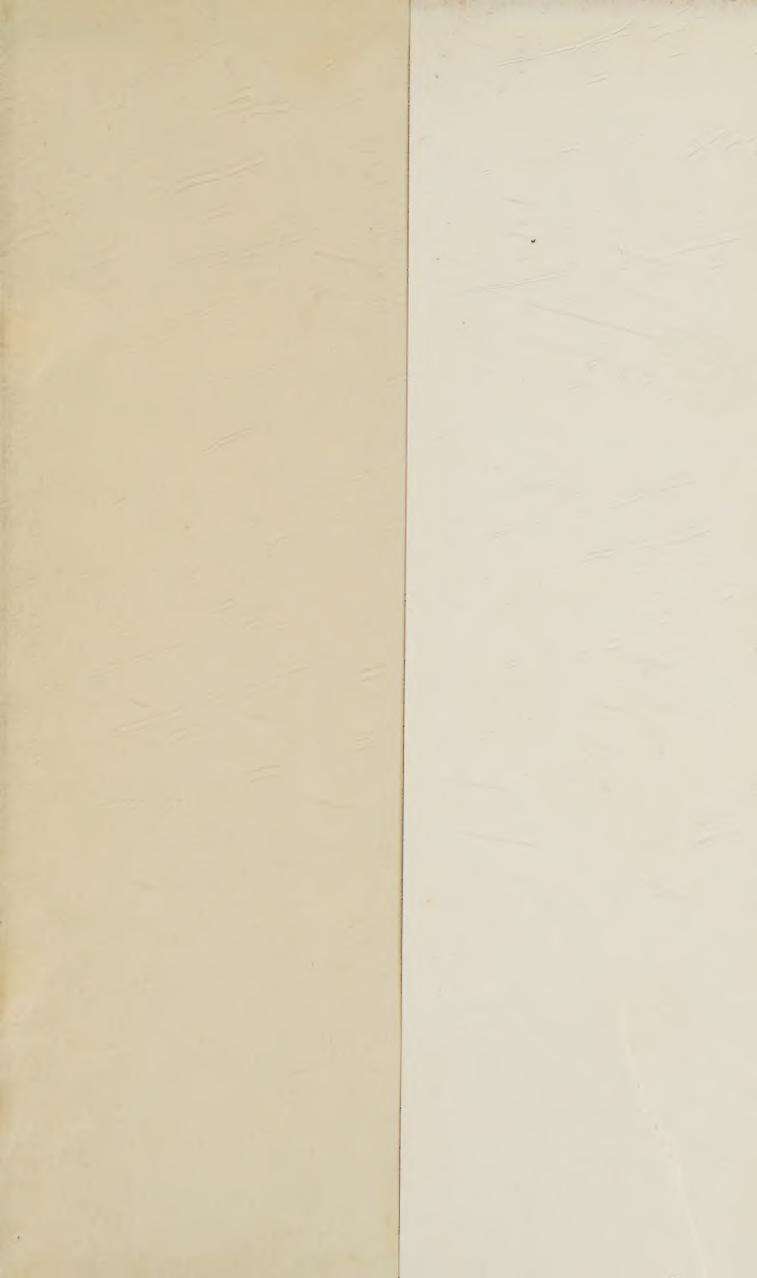
often exposed to popular fury—the Sultan never. His divine character, as the vice-regent of the Prophet, adds considerably to his temporal authority.

Sultan Mahmoud was one of the five great men who have been the instruments of signalling our age. He ventured on the glorious attempt which few have survived, and none have ever lived to see accomplished—that of regenerating a corrupt people. The attempt failed utterly, as regarded the creation of new powers and capacities: the old were destroyed; but there was no reproductive principle in the Turkish character. At the bidding of his Sultan, the Turk laid aside the external distinctions of his race, and with them he abandoned the sustaining pride, the consciousness of superiority, the elevating fanaticism that fused his patriotism and his creed into one great passion. His contempt for the Frank, whose politics, dress, and mode of warfare he had been compelled to assume, has reacted into respect and fear; such fear, at least, as a Turk can know, for they are a gallant people still, those Osmanlis.¹

And though they feel that their empire is drawing to a close, and are prepared for the fulfilment of one of those strange old prophecies, like that which prepared Incas² for the subjugation of *their* country, they will doubtless die fearlessly in defence of those walls so fearlessly won by their fierce ancestors.

¹ This is the name by which they choose to be called. *Turk* is an epithet of contempt, though they call their country and their language *Toorkey*.

² The kings of Peru before the Spanish Conquest.



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